

hath been Printed and reprinted, and the  
of souls thereby promoted, and will ( I believe )  
be some addition to his crown and glory, in the  
Blessed Day, ( which God in mercy grant that  
may come quickly ) when the Son of God shall give  
to every man according as his work shall be. The  
Lord saw good to remove my Brother out of this  
into a better world, before he had fully expressed  
what was upon his heart, respecting this Genera-  
tion. I have so much the more reason to bend my  
knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
in humble thankfulness, for that he has lengthened  
my life to this day, and given me to endea-  
vour the finishing of what my Brother so hap-  
pily began, though whether with the like suc-  
cess, is with him unto whom it belongs to give the  
INCREASE.

It is the most glorious work in the world ( the  
Angels of Heaven think so, and would be  
glad if they might be so improv'd ) to have an  
hand in the Conversion, and consequently in the  
Salvation of pretious immortal souls. May this  
poor Labour, or any other weak and worthless En-  
deavours of mine, be in the least Conducing that  
way, my design and desires are attained. I  
trust in Christ it shall be so.

INCREASE MATHER.

Boston,  
3. m. 16. d.  
1672.

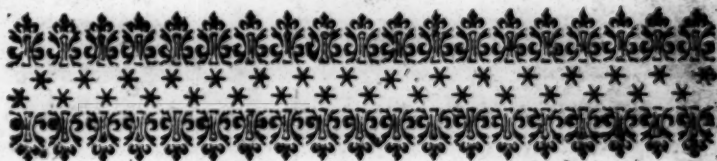


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# A CALL

TO THE

RISING GENERATION.

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1. Chron. 28. 9.

*If thou seek him, he will be found of thee.*

**G**Od in his Providence doth many times so order, as that *the last words* of his eminent Servants shall be of most weighty Consideration. The Scripture sets a special Emphasis, and Remark upon the last words of David 2. Sam. 23. 1. *now these are the last words of David the sweet singer of Israel*; not that he never spake any words after those, but they were expressed by him towards the Close of his dayes, not very long before he left the world. The same is to be said concerning the words now before us; They are amongst the last, yea, the dying speeches

speeches of that holy man of God ; who perceiving that the time of his departure was at hand, layeth a most solemn Charge upon his son Solomon, that he should endeavour to approve himself a faithful Servant of his Fathers God. Several Arguments are made use of to back this Charge ; one is in these words, taken from the benefit which would attend a *sincere seeking the Lord*. *If thou seek him, he will be found of thee* ; that is to say, thou shalt then be made happy in the enjoyment of God for ever. *If others seek God in sincerity of heart, they shall find him, but (saith David) it is eminently true concerning thee, because the Lord hath been thy Fathers God*. Thou art a Child of a Father that had a special interest in God, and therefore if thou set thy self to seek him, know for thy encouragement, that he will be most ready to shew himself favourable to thee. Wherefore the Doctrine which may at present be insisted on from the words, is,

DOCT. That *The Children of godly parents are under peculiar Advantages & Encouragements to seek the Lord*.

For the Clearing of this Doctrine, 2 Things may be attended. 1. To enquire what is implied in this *Seeking the Lord* which the Text speaketh of, 2. How it does appear that the Children of godly parents are under peculiar Advantages and Encouragements so to doe.

Quest.

**QUEST. 1.** *What is Implied in this seeking the Lord?*

**ANSW. 1.** *It doth imply that men by nature are such as have lost God. The sinner hath lost himself, Luk. 15. 32. this thy brother was lost, and is found. Yea, and he hath lost God too, He is wandred from his Fathers house. Hence the Apostle said to the Ephesians, they were without God in the world. Yea, it is true concerning children of godly parents as well as others Ephs. 2. 3. we (saith the Apostle) were by nature the Children of wrath even as others. We that are Jews and descended of holy Ancestors, we that are now converted, and made Apostles of Christ, by nature were Subjects of the wrath and righteous displeasure of God. Not but that some of the Children of godly men have Grace wrought in them whilest in a state of Infancy, as John Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mothers womb, but they do not derive that grace from their parents, and therefore it is not natural, but supernatural, when any of the Children of sinful men are made gracious.*

**2.** *Seeking the Lord doth imply a sense of this lost condition. Sense of want puts men upon seeking. The Prodigal was hunger-bitten before he would seek to be reconciled to his Father, when he saw that he was fain to live upon husks, and that there was no way but he*

must perish with hunger, except he sought unto his Father for a supply, he would do so. If a man hath lost a thing, except he know that he hath lost it, he will not seek after it. Hence in the Parable concerning the lost peice of silver, it is said, *what woman if she lose a peice of silver, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till shee find it,* Luk. 15. 8. So that there must be sense of Loss before there will be seeking or finding. Nor will men seek the Lord except they be by his Spirit made sensible, that they have lost his favour, and are through sin and the Fall become miserable.

3. *This seeking doth imply earnest desire to find God.* That which a man seeketh after he would be glad to find. When Job sought after Communion with God, he maketh enquiry, *where shall I find him?* Chapt. 23. 3. No one will seek after that which is not an object of his desires, *Psal. 27. 4. One thing have I desired, that will I seek after.* If thou seek him, that is to say, if thou earnestly desire to find the Lord, then so it shall be. If God be the chief Object of thy desires, if the desire of thy soul be towards the remembrance of his Name, then he will be found of thee. As it was with David himself, *Psa. 63. 1. O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty*

thirsty Land where no water is. How are the desires and affections of a thirsty man carried out after water, in a thirsty Land where no water is? When the desires of the soul are in like manner carried out after God, that is seeking him.

4. *Seeking the Lord does imply Diligence in the use of meanes in order to obtaining the favour of God.* The end impliyes the meanes which is necessary in order to obtaining that end, now the favour of God is the end of this seeking. Hence 'tis called a seeking his face, i. e. his favour. *Psal. 105. 4. Seek the Lord's face* and the meanes in order to obtaining that end is Repentance of former sins, Faith in the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, (*Jer. 50. 5.*) walking according to the holy Rules of the Word of God, which is therefore called a *walking in all well pleasing before the Lord*, Inasmuch as so to walk is the way to find the continuance of Divine Favour.

5. *Seeking the Lord doth imply the worship and service of God.* As they that do not worship God are said to be such as seek him not, *Isa. 65. 1. I am found of them that sought me not*, meaning that the Gentiles who in former times did not own and worship the true God, should be brought to the knowledge of him. So to seek God is to worship him, *2. Chron. 11. 16.*



It is said, that such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel h. e. to worship him, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of the Fathers. It is true, that in special that great duty of prayer ( which is a special part of religious worship ) is intended, yet not that only ; all other parts of Divine Worship are comprehended under this expression, Hence it is in the Context noted by that of *serving the Lord*. Now to Serve GOD is to worship him aright. We ( said they in Ezra ) are the servants of the God of Heaven, meaning that they did worship none else but him, so that a Servant of the Lord is the same with a worshiper of him. This seeking is here set in in opposition to *forsaking* God. Now Forsaking hath a special respect to that sin of Idolatry and false Worship. David was a man that was very faithful to God in the matters of his worship: As for Idols he would not so much as name them *Psal. 16. 4.* And we read in the Sacred history of David, that when he had subdued his Enemies, he burnt their Images and Idols, in an holy indignation at the sin of Idolatry: Now he doth exhort his son Solomon to follow his Father's steps, in being Loyal to God in the matters of his worship. All these particulars may be intended here. If thou seek the Lord h. e. if thou art sensible of thy lost estate by nature, so as to desire reconciliation with God in the first place, and  
doest

dost therefore repent of Sin and believe in Christ, and continnest to worship and serve God according to his own will, then be assured that thou shalt enjoy his favour, and be everlastingly blessed.

We come now to the second thing propounded, viz.

Quest. 2. *To shew how it doth appear that the children of godly parents are under peculiar Advantages and Encouragements to seek the Lord.*

Answ. 1. *In that the vein of Election do run through the loyns of godly Parents for the most part. Tho it be not wholly and only so, that Elect Parents have none but elect Children, or that elect children are alwaies born of elect Parents [a] yet God hath seen meet to cast y line of election so, as that generally elect Children are cast upon elect Parents. John directs one of his Epistles, To the elect Lady and her Children, whom he also found walking in the Truth: Not only the Mother but the Children did belong to God. As usually so it is, that if the Mother be elect, at least wise some of the Children are so too. There are many Scriptures which do intimate this Truth, Psal. 105. 8. He hath remembred his Covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Intimating both that the longer a generation*

[a] See Mr. Carter of Abraham's Covenant, p. 38. 39. & Dr. Winter of Infant Bapt. pag. 37.

Generation does continue godly, the more gracious will the Lord be to the seed and posterity, & that there are some that in a continued succession for many generations the Lord hath chosen, Hence *Psal. 103. 17. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto childrens Children.* Shewing that God from Eternity hath designed mercy to some Parents and to their children, and their Childrens Children, *Isa., 59. ult. My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put into thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds seed saith the Lord, from hence forth and for ever.* To the same purpose is that, *Ezek. 37. 25.* What more plain can be spoken, to shew that God doth many times cast elect children upon elect Parents in a continued succession from generation to generation? See also *Isa. 65. 22, 23. Mine Elect and their off-spring with them are the blessed of the Lord.* So that when Parents are Elect, usually their Children are so too. Hence it was said to Zacheus, *Salvation is come to thy house, Luk. 19. 9.* Not only to his Soul but to his house. Usually if God intends to save a man, there are some of his house i. e. posterity that are heirs of Salvation also. And therefore the Apostle said to the Jaylor, *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house, Act. 16. 31.* How did Paul know that if the Jaylor believed

believed his Children should be saved? was it from any special Revelation concerning those Children more than with respect unto others? no; but he knew that when God brought the Father into a state of Salvation, he was wont to save however *some* of his Children and Posterity. Hence also Paul said to Timothy, *when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith in thee, which dwelt first in thy Grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded in thee also.* 2. Tim. 1. 5. he doth probably & hopefully conclude that Timothy did belong to God, because he was the son of a godly mother and Grand-mother. Moreover, Experience and observation does confirm this Truth, that *de facto* it hath been so. For the Elect are not found in all places alike, but in some Nations more than in others, and that for many generations successively. And in some Families more than in others: There are some Families in the world, that God hath designed to shew peculiar mercy to them, from generation to generation. And if an account should be taken concerning all the godly men that are now alive in the world, doubtless it would be found that the greatest part of them are sprung from godly Parents. Though there may be many converted ones in the world, whose Parents did not fear God; yet for the Generality of true believers they are such as have descended from believing Parents.

Secondly

2. The Lord hath established his Covenant not only with Parents, but with Children also. Gen. 17. 7. I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. The Saints in all Ages are concerned in Abrahams Covenant, under which Children are Comprehended. To say that the Covenant was extended to Children under the Old Testament, but not under the New, is to lessen the Grace of God in these dayes of the Gospel. Yea then the Jews would have been great losers by believing on Christ: If they could have said, in former times our Children were interested in the gracious Covenant of God, but if we embrace the Gospel they shall have no part in the Lord, this would have been such an objection against believing as could never have bin answered. • Wherefore, we shall find that those Scriptures which relate to Gospel times, expressly declare, That not only Believers themselves, but their Children also are subjects of the Lords gracious Covenant with his People. *Isai. 61. 8. 9. I will make an everlasting Covenant with them and their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their Off-spring among the People; all that see them shall acknowledge that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. And Chapt. 65, ver. 23, They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their off-spring with*



with them. Now this Consideration is a great encouragement to seek the Lord; So it was to them. Jer. 3. 22. *We come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* We are thy Covenant-people, and that does encourage us to come unto thee. And this did encourage David to seek and hope for the Lords Salvation Ps. 86. 16. *Save the son of thine handmaid.* And the Apostle did encourage the Jews to repent and return unto the Lord from this Argument, viz. in that they were the children of the Covenant Act. 3. 19, 25. From thence it is Evident that the Children of godly Parents stand in a peculiar relation unto God, and that therefore he will not cast them off, except there be great cause for it: Not surely as long as they seek him, and desire to return to him and serve him.

3. *There are special promises belonging to such Children.* Not only the Covenant in general which is, as it were, a *Consolation* of glorious Promises, but there are peculiar Promises made concerning them. There is a promise that they shall be blessed above other Children Ps. 112. 1, 2. *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, his seed shall be mighty on the earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed.* And that successively from one generation to another, Ps. 102. 28. *The children of thy servants shall continue, & their seed shall be established before thee.*

In

In another place, David speaking concerning the Children of God's servants, and that in the dayes of the Messiah, saith *A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.* Psa. 22. 30. intimating that the Lord will uphold among the Children of his people a certain number that shall be owned as a race of Gods Children. And therefore we have a Promise of converting grace to be bestowed on such children, *Dent. 30. 6. The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed.* There is a promise for grace as well as to grace, as to those that belong to the Election of Grace. Circumcision of heart implyeth Regeneration, which is promised to the Lords servants with respect unto their Children; And that was one reason why the Lord did of old appoint Circumcision to be applyed to the Children of his people, that so this promise of converting Grace in due time to be vouchsafed, might be sealed. The same thing is promised *Isai. 44. 3. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine off-spring.* And the Lord hath made a blessed promise of salvation to such children, *Isai. 49. 25. I will save thy Children.* Hence it is promised that *the seed of the Lords servants shall inherit Sion* Psa. 69. 36. Which word is made good in these dayes of the Gospel, by giving Heaven to the Children of believers as their everlasting Inheritance. Now albeit these promises

promises do not absolutely respect all the children of every godly man, only the elect among them, yet they are generally and indefinitely propounded; and that is encouragement as to Parents to pray for their children, yea for all of them, as it was to David 1. *Chron.* 17, 3 last ver. *O my God, thou hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him an house, therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee. And now Lord, thou art that God that hast promised this goodness to thy servant; now therefore let it please thee to bless the house ( i. e. the Family and posterity ) of thy servant that it may be before thee for ever; for thou blessest O Lord and it shall be blessed for ever.* So it is a wonderful encouragement to the Children of holy men to seek unto the Lord for grace and Salvation for themselves: The Child of a godly man may come before the Lord, and say, Lord thou hast promised to bestow Grace, and give eternal blessings unto those that are the Children of such as fear thy Name, my Father, my Mother thou knowest did fear thy Name, why then may not that promise belong to me?

4. *The children of godly parents are the subjects of much faithful prayer.* David\* prayed earnestly for his son Solomon, 1. *Chron.* 29. 19. & 22. 16. So did Isaac for his son Jacob, *Gen.* 28. 1, 3, 4. Now it is matter of great encouragement that prayer is going: especially the prayers of godly parents will doe much in order

order to obtaining mercy for their children. For they have a great natural affection toward their Children, which when it is sanctified, maketh them to be the more earnest with God for them. If a child were to ask prayers for his Life, let him desire the prayers of his Father, if his Father be indeed one that hath an Interest in Heaven. It is said in the fifth Commandement, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy dayes may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* Exod. 20, 12. because as for dutiful Children, their parents are engaged to pray much for them, and by that means do lengthen out their dayes. In the Hebrew it is *they shall prolong thy dayes* h. e. thy Father and thy mother shall do so. How should they do it? [b] even by praying for their Posterity, and blessing them in the Name of the Lord, and by that means prolonging their dayes not only upon the Earth, but to Eternity in Heaven, of which the Land of Canaan was a Type. The Prayers of godly Parents have a great Influence and Interest for the obtaining blessings temporal, spiritual, and eternal for their Children. Abraham's prayers for Ishmael prevailed farr, and his prayers for Isaac prevailed further, *Abraham* said unto God, O that *Ishmael* might live before thee, and God said, as for *Ishmael* I have heard

[b] See Dr. Owen on Psa. 130. pag. 218.

heard thee, behold I have blessed him, but my Covenant will I establish with *Isaac*: Especially if parents pray in Faith. As sometimes a father hath a particular Faith for such a child. As to those that have much Communion with God and know much of his mind, many times it is so, that a believing parent can say, as for such a child I know he shall be blessed and made a blessing, I have surely prevailed with God for him. As *Isaac* said of *Jacob* *Gen. 27. 33. I have blessed him and he shall be blessed*; so a godly parent can sometimes say, such a child of mine, *Christ* hath blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed for ever. Now this is a great encouragement to children, that Prayer and Faith hath been acting for them: Yea, that a *Stock* of Prayers hath been laid up for them. Is it not a great encouragement unto a child when he can say, my gracious Father hath carried my name, before God in secret many a Thousand time, even every day & night since I was born into the world? certainly these prayers shall not fall to the ground.

3. *Such Children have blessed Examples set before them.* Now that's a great advantage. That wise [†] *Heathen* could say, *plus vivitur exemplis quam preceptis*. Examples will doe more then precepts, upon young ones especially. A Father that walketh with God, may say to his Children as *Paul* to the *Corinthians* [†] *Semper* ians



Corinthians unto whom he was a spiritual Father, 1. Cor. 5. 15, 16. *In Christ Iesus I have begotten you through the Gospel, wherefore I beseech you be you followers of me.* And again, Cap. 11. 1. *Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* So may a Father that walketh before God as he ought to do say to his Children; Observe my example, and follow me as I follow Christ. Or as the same Apostle said to Timothy, *Thou hast known my Doctrine and manner of life,* 2. Tim. 3. 10. Timothy was Intimate with Paul and therefore doubtless knew more of his secret way of walking and Communion with God, than was known or imagined by the world; so do children observe more of their Parents holy Course of life than others do, which is no small advantage. A Child is witness of his Father's Zeal, Faith, Patience; he seeth that his Father is conscientious and holy, and much in prayer to God. Now what an advantage is this? He needs not goe farr to see how he ought to walk and please God, for he seeth it before his eyes every day, by the Example and Coppy his Father sets before him. Moreover, it is a great encouragement unto the Child of a godly Parent, when he can think and say, my Father did serve God, and the Lord accepted of him, therefore if he serve God he will accept of me. My Father did repent and believe and walk in the way of holiness, God blessed him & his family; there-  
fore

therefore if I walk in the steps of my Fathers Faith and Obedience, the God of my Father will bless me and mine for ever.

6. *The Children of wicked men fall under heavy curses and Threatnings*; Therefore they are godly mens Children unto whom peculiar Encouragements to seek the Lord do appertain; As for wicked transgressors, they are cursed not only in their persons, but in their Posterity, even cursed in the fruit of their body, *Deut. 28. 15. The house (i. e. the Children) of the wicked shall be overthrown. Prov. 14. 11. The seed of evil doers shall never be renowned, prepare slaughter for his Children for the iniquity of his Fathers, Isai. 14. 20, 21.* It is true, that if a Child do unfeignedly repent and turn to God, though his parents should have been never so wicked, God will accept of him; The repenting son shall not be damned meerly for his Father's iniquity, *Ezek. 18. 14.* But it is more rare for such Children ever to repent; and if they do not repent, they shall be punished for their Fathers and Mother's sins as well as for their own, because they justifie them by doing like them. How many Examples are there Recorded in the Scripture of God's punishing Children with their Parents and because of their Sin? So Achan's Children, and Dathan's and Abiram's; yea, Millions of Children that were drowned

and

and damned with their cursed parents in Noah's Flood; and when Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed, not only the parents but the Children perished, and now suffer together the vengeance of eternal fire; and was not an expresse Charge given Concerning the little ones of the Amalekites, Midianites &c. that they should be destroyed with their Fathers? Thus doth the Lord recompence the iniquity of the fathers into the bosome of their Children.

7. We find in the Scripture that the Children of holy men have bin encouraged from this consideration, That they were so related to such as had a special interest in God. -- So Jacob, Gen. 31. 3. The God of my Father hath been with me. and ver. 42. except the God of my Father and Fear of Isaac had been with me, and Chapt. 32. 9. Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac. He was greatly encouraged in looking up to God from that very Consideration, that the Lord was the God of his Father, and God of his Grand-Father. So Moses Exod. 18. 4. The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. and David Psa. 116. 16. O Lord, truly I am thy Servant; I am thy servant, the son of thy Handmaid: Inasmuch as his mother was a precious godly woman, he was encouraged to plead his Interest in God. So Sblomon, 1. King. 8. 25. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with

*our Fathers, let him not leave us nor forsake us. Inasmuch as the Lord was their fathers God, Solomon and the Lords people with him had their hearts drawn forth to hope that he would be their God also, so as never to forsake them. And Daniel's heart was enlarged in giving praises to God, since he could say, "I thank thee O thou God of my Fathers who hast given me wisdom." Dan. 2. 23.*

These things then make it evident that such children are under peculiar encouragement to seek the Lord.

USE. *Hence it is a great mercy to be born and brought up under godly parents. Though some make a light matter of it, like Esau that said what good shall this birth-right doe me? he despised his birth-right; but the things mentioned make it to be a mercy indeed. To be under the wing of the covenant tho but as to the external dispensation of it is it self a mercy. To have the meanes of Grace vouchsafed, (which is ever wont to follow upon a covenant-interest in God) is mercy: Wherefore the Apostle having propounded that question, What advantage hath the Jew above the Gentile? maketh Answer, much every way, chiefly in that to them are committed the Oracles of God. Rom. 3. 2. Next unto Christ and the Spirit of grace, the blessed Bible is the greatest gift that ever*

*See Dr. Tuckney on Phil. 3. 8. pag. 66. 67. 68.*



ever was bestowed on the world; now this the Children of godly parents are wont to enjoy. Timothy being descended from a godly mother and grandmother, even from a child knew the Scriptures, 2. *Tim.* 3. 15. To enjoy the Word and Ordinances of God publickly dispensed is a great mercy; it is therefore mentioned as such a blessing as is enough to make amends for many sorrows and afflictions, *Thine eyes shall behold thy teachers* Isa. 30. 20. This is wont to be the portion of godly mens Children. And to have the benefit of private instructions, admonitions, exhortations is a great mercy; Solomon confesseth that his father and his mother taught him good doctrine; *Prov.* 4. 2. It was good because for his everlasting benefit and advantage. Nor are the children of godly men without this benefit, *Psal.* 34. 11. *Come you children hearken to me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* It is a great mercy to be taught and principled in the fear of God, and that sometimes: to be told of the evil of sin, the infinite danger of dying in a natural, unconverted estate, the necessity of obtaining an interest in Christ, and to be directed in the right way to salvation. Also to be the subjects of much prayer is great mercy; It's mentioned concerning Solomon as a special Favour God would vouchsafe to him, *Psal.* 72. 15. *Prayer shall be made for him continually.* Thus concerning the children



children of the Lords people, the publique prayers of the Church reach them; and their godly parents are dayly praying for them; so that prayer is made for them continually. Moreover such children experience outward blessings and preservations for their parents sake. It is said concerning him that feareth God, *his children shall find a place of Refuge* Pro. 14. 26. And the Lord said to Abraham concerning Ishmael Gen. 21. 13. *I will make a nation of him because he is thy seed.* And God spared Solomon for his father Davids sake, --- 1. King. 11. 34. And as for Jehoram, all his children were destroyed save one, and that one had been cut off too, had it not been for the respect which the Lord did bear to his blessed fore-Father 1. Kin. 8. 19. Yea, & such children have a greater blessing with that outward state which God in his Providence shall see meet to cast upon them, than the Children of wicked men usually have, tho' it may be they have not so much of the world as some others, yet since what they have was gotten in a way of righteousness, a Blessing cometh along with it. For this cause David saith, *a little that a righteous man hath is better than the Riches of many wicked.* Psal. 37. 16.

Use. 2. Hence we ought to nourish hope concerning such children, & that above what can be said with respect to the Children of other parents. But some one may object & say, Have not good men

bad Children? Godly men ungodly Children? How then is there Ground of Hope with respect unto such Children in Peculiarwise?

*Answ.* This is sadly true; the Most High to shew the sovereignty of his Grace, sometimes chooseth some of the Children of a wicked parent, and refuseth some of those who are the off-spring of godly parents; Also to shew that it is not in the power of men to give grace, no not in the power of godly men, so much as to their own Children; sometimes such children prove very unlike unto their godly parents. It was therefore said to Samuel, *thy sons do not walk in thy wayes*, 1. Sam. 8. 5. And that profane Jehoiakim. how unlike was he to his blessed Father Josiah? It is noted concerning Josiah, that when the word of God was read to him, he rent his clothes, humbled himself, and was afraid of the Lords holy displeasure; but Jehoiakim after three or four leaves were read, he took his pen-knife, and cut the Roll in peices, and burnt it in the fire, he was not afraid nor rent his Clothes, Jer. 36. 23, 24. Yet this is further to be added and considered that when the Children of good men are unlike their parents in grace and Holiness it proceeds not from any unfaithfulness in the blessed God as to his Covenant with such parents, or with their children. for

1. Usually it is some evil in such parents (though otherwise godly) which the Lord doth

doth punish in their Children ; either they were not so diligent in teaching and instructing them as they ought to be ; If we must judge all those parents ungodly whose Children are miserably instructed, I am certain that many amongst us who have a name to live, & would be thought to have the root of the matter in them, will be found among the ungodly. Or parents are sinfully indulgent towards their Children ; so was Eli, indeed he instructed them, told them of the evil of those waies they walked in, and exhorted them to reform but he corrected and restrained them not : Isaac was too indulgent towards his profane Esau ; So was David towards Absalom, that afterwards proved a Rebel, rising up in armes against his own Father : And he did sinfully indulge Adonijah, the Scripture takes notice of it, that *his father had not displeased him at any time, in saying why hast thou done so ?* 1. King. 1. 6. No wonder he came to such an unhappy End, for, usually such children are first or last a shame to the father that begat them, and bitterness to the mother that bare them. Or it may be parents do not pray and believe for their Children as they ought to doe ; God in this case sometimes saith unto parents, according to your faith be it done unto you : If you pray much, & believe much for your children, you shall obtain much Mercy from the Lord for them, *Psal. 33. ult.*

2. Many times the Children of godly men are like their parents. In some godly families all the children thereof are made partakers of converting saving grace: So, in Jacobs Family; there is reason to believe that his twelve sons did repent before they died, and they are now in Heaven, considering that they were Types of the Elect of God, and their names were written upon the breast of the High Priest, when he entered into the Holy of Holies. So concerning Job's children, the Scripture saith, that after the death of his Children and the loss of his estate, the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, yet he had but ten Children after that, which was the number he had before, wherefore Interpreters probably conclude that his other Children were not lost; they might all goe to Heaven notwithstanding the sad and sudden death which beset them. And Experience confirms the truth of this, we see that in some Families God is pleased to bestow converting Grace upon all the children therein, especially if their parents be very much in prayer to God for them. I remember I once heard an holy praying man say, my Father had six children, and they are all either with Christ, or in Christ; and he hath given me six children, three of them are already with Christ, and the other ( I bless his name ) are in Christ. And I have read of one [c] who held  
much

[c] See *Fulfilling of the Script.* pag. 442.



much Communion with God, that once said to an intimate friend, *I have this day obtained mercy from God, not only for my self, but also for all mine.* and evident signs of regenerating grace did afterwards appear in all his Children.

3. God is wont to remember & establish his covenant with *some* of the children of his Servants however; if not to all yet with *some* of them. It's commonly seen that as for wicked parents, though they have many children, they are all ungodly, like their Parents; but it is seldom known that if a godly man hath many Children that they all prove wicked; first or last God converteth some of them. If their be an Ishmael in Abraham's Family, there is also an Isaac: if there be an Esau in Isaac's Family, there is also a Jacob: If there be an Absalom in Davids Family, there is also a Solomon; nor ought we to doubt but that Nathan and many more of David's children are now in Heaven, albeit three of them perished.

4. If the Lord cast off the Immediate seed he remembers his Covenant to others that are more remote; Esau was hated, yet it is conceived by learned men that Job and his godly friends were of Isaacs posterity by Esau. Samuels son Joel was not like his father but his grand-child Heman was an excellent Prophet, like his blessed Grand-father; yea,  
and



and many of Samuel's great grand-children were faithful Ministers in the House of God, 1. *Chron.* 6. 3. and 25. 3, 6. The Lord has sometimes cast off a few generations, & yet at last remembers his Covenant made with blessed Ancestors, *Jer.* 31. 17. *There is hope in thine end* ( h. e. as to after generations there is hope ) *saieth the Lord, that thy Children shall come again to their own Border.* There is then cause to nourish hope concerning such Children; there is so with respect to succeeding Generations in *New-England*: Albeit there is doleful Degeneracy appearing in the face of this generation, and no man can say but that a considerable part of the present generation will perish both temporally and eternally, yet there are some that the Lord will remember his Covenant with, even a remnant according to Election that shall be saved. We may say of *New-England's* Children ( many of them ) as the Apostle speaketh concerning the Jews, however the case may be with them at the present, *they are beloved for their Fathers sake,* *Rom.* 11. 28.

USE. 3. *Hence Parents should be careful how they approve themselves for their poor children's ( as well as for their own ) sake.* There are especially Three things that Parents should be carefull about for their Childrens Sake.

1. That they be in a state of grace themselves;  
that

that they have a special and saving interest in God. As David said to his son Solomon, *1 Chron. 28. 20. The Lord God, even my God will be with thee;* So if you can upon good grounds say, *The Lord is my God,* you may the better hope he will be with your Children. If you be indeed righteous in the sight of God, 'twill be your poor Childrens advantage *Is. 37. 25 I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* But if you be unconverted, and Christless, what a case are your Children in? that if they be in any distress, they have a father that cannot Pray for them, or if he do, his prayers find no acceptance with God, because they proceed from one that hath not an interest in Heaven. Remember that Scripture *Deut. 5. 29. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments alwayes, that it might be well with them, and with their Children for ever!* plainly intimating that if Parents truly fear God, their children shall fare the better for it; Yea, let me tell you, that then if any of them dye in their Infancies [d] you need not doubt of their salvation, *Deut. 30. 19. Thou and thy seed shall live.* God having taken your Children into a Covenant of life, if they never break that

[d] See Mr. Whiston's Primitive practice, of Infant Baptism.

that Covenant, shall they not live for ever? yea, they shall live for ever,

2. Parents should be careful what opinions they imbrace, for oftentimes the poison of a corrupt Opinion in the Father proveth baneful to the child; as *Naaman's* Leprosie went down from Generation to Generation; so the plague of spiritual Leprosie in the Head. is sometimes propagated from the Father to the Son.

3. Parents should be careful of their Conversation; because their Children are apt to follow their example, especially in that which is evil. As it's noted of *Ahaziah*, that he walked in the way of his father and of his mother 1. King. 22. 52. And of those superstitious persons 2. King. 17. 41. *They served their graven Images, both their Children and their Childrens childrens; as did their Fathers, so doe they to this day.* If the Father follow superstitious or profane practices, it is most likely that the children will do so too. Therefore you that are parents, in the fear of God look to it that you do not scandalize your children by an evil example: If your Children see you in drink sometimes, will they not be Drunkards too? If they hear you swear, will not they swear also? If they see you careless in the observation of the Sabbath, will they not likewise be guilty of Sabbath-breaking? And if they  
see

see you live in the neglect of holy duties, no Prayer in the Family, how shall they be seekers of God? It will be a wonder if such Children do not prove Atheists, that are brought up in Families where they never see any prayer or acknowledgement of God. O think with your selves, if you that are Parents should any of you perish, and your miserable Children should follow you to Hell, how will they curse you there? If thy Children perish throw thy evil Example, they will follow thee up and down in the ever-burning Lake crying out [e] Woe to us that ever we were born of such Parents that had no grace to teach us the wayes of God, and lead us in the pathes of Godliness! If you that were our parents had discharged your duty towards us, we might have been in the JOYES OF HEAVEN, but now our damned souls must live for ever in these everlasting flames; Thus wilt thou hear thine own Children yelling in thine Ears, world without end. Canst thou think of this and thy heart not break? then thy heart is an Adamant, and thy heart strings made of Iron sinews.

USE. 4. Of Exhortation.

1. Let godly Parents that are here before the

[e] See Mr. Bolton of Walking with God. p. 249.

the Lord this day, suffer the word of Exhortation, *Do you endeavour to the utmost of your power, that your Children may become seekers and servants of the only true God in Jesus Christ.* And indeed when you present them to the Lord in Baptism, you promise to do your utmost that they may become faithful servants of that God who is Father, Son, and Spirit; take heed that you do not become guilty of violating that engagement. God hath committed children unto you, that so you might bring them up for him, *The children which thou hast born unto me, Ezek. 16. 20.* If a man had the Children of a Prince or great man committed to his Care and Charge for Education, would he not be careful about that matter? It is a solemn thing, which it may be you have not duly considered, that the great God has entrusted you with those that are his Children that so you may nurse them up for him: O then bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. It is not enough for Parents to serve the Lord themselves, but they must use utmost endeavours that after they are dead, their children may walk in the ways of God. And if they be duly careful in that matter, they have reason to expect that God will remember & establish his Covenant with their Children. For is it noted concerning Abraham, that his care was that *his Family after him, (viz. after he should*  
*cease*



cease to be in the world ) *might keep the way of the Lord*, and so did the Lord bring upon him the thing which he had spoken and graciously promised with respect to Abrahams posterity. And in special you that are mothers have a great advantage put into your hands to be instilling [f] good principles into your childrens souls betimes. Solomon's mother taught him: We do not read that Absalom's and Adonijah's mother taught them, as Bathsheba did her son Solomon. And it is not for nothing, that when children have proved thus or so, particular notice is taken in Scripture, that such or such were their mothers: Rehoboam did not prove well, and it is noted that his mother was an Ammonitess. On the other hand, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Josiah were eminent Servants of God, and the Scripture does mention who were their mothers. O then you that are mothers should endeavour that your children (as *Luther* speaketh) may suck in Religion from their mothers Breasts.

And let all godly parents *earnestly seek unto the Lord for their poor children*. You ought to doe so dayly and particularly, and by name before the Lord, and thus should you doe every day: As we read concerning *Job*, that he offered burnt Offerings for his children according

[f] See *Mr. Firmin's Real Christian*. pag. 8.

to the number of them all, thus did Job continually. Chapt 1. 5. Remember that you are under peculiar encouragement so to doe: if the Children of godly Parents have special encouragement to seek the Lord, then the same thing must needs be true concerning Parents themselves, with respect to their children: And it is eminently true with respect to the Children of *New-England*, inasmuch as they are the posterity of such as have been sufferers on the account of the Name and Truth of the Lord Jesus. Are not such Parents pronounced blessed twice over? *Mat. 5. 11, 12.* even blessed in themselves, and in their posterity? Who knoweth but God may remember the kindness of the Fathers in these Churches ( who followed him into this Wilderness, whilst it was *a land not sown* ) unto their Children after them? Plead it with the Lord; if you that be godly Parents lay up a stock of prayers for your children, it may stand them in more stead than if you should leave them never such an Inheritance as to the things of the world; when you are dead your prayers shall live. There is many a Child whose Father and Mother is now in Heaven, that fareth the better and will do so for ever, on the account of prayers made for him by his blessed Parents while they were in this world. And this further let me say for your encouragement, that if the Lord stir up your hearts to be importunate

importunate with him for your Children, it is a sign that God intends mercy to them : That instance of *Monica*, Austins gracious mother is known and famous ; when she made her Complaint and

[||] *vade a me (inquit) ita* wept to a faithful  
*vivas. Fieri non potest ut* Minister, because her  
*filius istarum lacrimarum* son did for the pre-  
*pereat. August. Confess.* sent follow ungodly  
*Lib. 3. Cap. 12.* Courses and Compa-  
nions ; [||] *Be of good*

Comfort ( said that holy man ) for 'it cannot be that a Child of so many prayers and tears should perish :

Say not, Oh ! but I have prayed, and yet see no answer to my prayers ! well ! but continue seeking the Lord still, despair not of a good answer at last . That famous Mr. Rogers of Dedham would sometimes say, *If I see a Child that hath either a godly father or a godly mother, I shall have hope for him a long time, but if he hath a godly father and mother too, I'll never leave hoping for him until I see him turn'd off the Gallows .*

2. Let me direct my Exhortation to the Children of godly parents : There are many such that hear me this day :

*Be you exhorted to know, and serve, and seek the God of your Fathers .*

Consider therefore,

1. That the Lord is your Father's God. Know

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the

the God of thy Father saith David. *Prov. 27. 10. Forsake not thy fathers friend.* And wilt thou forsake thy Fathers God, who is the best friend that ever thy Father had? Children are loth to part with other things, because they were their Fathers; As Naboth said concerning his Vineyard, *God forbid that I should part with the Inheritance of my Father, 1. King. 21. 3.* The Lord was the Inheritance of thy Father, and wilt thou let goe thine Interest in Him? Remember and consider that Scripture, *Exod. 15. 2. The Lord is my Father's God, and I will exalt him.* So say thou, the Lord is my Fathers God, and therefore I will fear and seek and serve him.

Consider. 2. *The Good and Benefit that will follow upon a sincere seeking to the Lord.* If there were nothing more to be said but only this, it should be a prevailing Motive, *viz.* That then your Parents will have Joy in you; *A wise son (i. e. a godly son) maketh a glad father.* The Apostle John hath such an expression as this *I have no greater joy than to hear that my Children walk in the truth, 3. Joh. 4.* Nor is there any greater Joy to a godly Father than to see truth of grace in his children; this comforts him more than to see that his Children are become rich or great in the world, know also for your encouragement that, if you seek the Lord with your whole heart, He will be

be found of you, yea, tho your sins and provocations have been never so great. Was there ever a greater sinner than Manasseh, the son of blessed Hezekiah, yet when he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the Lord God of his Fathers, and prayed unto him, he was entreated of him; 2. Chron. 33. 12, 13. O think of it you that ( though the Children of godly Parents ) have bin haingous sinners before the Lord, seek him sincerely, & he will pardon all your sins & save your souls form eternal death. I remember I have read concerning  
 “ the [ g ] Emperour *Otho* the 2d. That having a son whose name was *Luitolp*, an  
 “ haughty young man, that rebelled against his Father, and for safety betook himself to  
 “ the City of *Mentz*, which being besieged by the Emperour, *Luitolp* fled to another place;  
 “ and on a day when his Father was in the Field, his son unexpectedly came to him,  
 “ and keeling before his father humbly begged for pardon, with tears acknowledging his  
 “ Offences, and that he was worthy of a thousand deaths, but if it would please him to  
 “ give him his life, he should ever be a loyal and obedient son for the time to come; presently his Fathers Bowels yerned over him  
 “ and he restored that prodigal son to his former place and dignities, who ever after approved himself as became a Loyal subject and  
 “ dutiful Son.

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How much more will the blessed God pardon you and accept you into his favour, all your **Rebellions** notwithstanding, if indeed you sincerely seek unto him! Yea, and God will bless you when your parents shall be taken from you, he will then be a Father to you, *Psal. 27. 10. When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.* viz. as a tender-hearted Father takes his child up into his armes and beareth him in his bosome. It is therefore said concerning the just man that *his Children are blessed after him, Prov. 20. 7.* And Jacob told his sons that tho' he died, God would be with them, *Gen. 48. 11.* It is also noted concerning Isaac, that God blessed him after the death of his Father Abraham, *Gen. 25. 11.* Not but that the Lord blessed him before that, only after his Fathers death the blessing of the Lord was upon him more then ever.

Consider 3. *The evil that is in your not seeking the Lord.* What a grief of mind will this be to your godly parents? The Father of a Fool hath no Joy. Alas! there is many a poor parent may say to their children as *Jephthah* upon another account spake to his Daughter, *Judg. 11. 35. He rent his clothes, and said Alas my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, thou art one of them that trouble me.* Why should you bring your parents down with sorrow to their graves? How did it goe to the heart

Heart of David when Absalom died and was cut off in his sins! 2. Sam. 18. 33. *He was much moved, and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom: would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.* As if he had said, Had I died my soul had been happy, but now thou art dead, I have no other hope but that thy soul is suffering the vengeance of Eternal fire. Remember that this will aggravate your sin and condemnation That you were born of godly parents and you did not walk in their steps. Jer. 50. 7- *They sinned against the hope of their fathers;* it is mentioned as the great aggravation of their sin. Such children roll reproach upon the Covenant of God, they cause men to say, there is nothing in being in Covenant with God, nor is it any mercy to be born of parents that fear the Lord; And will not the Lord judge you for causing such a vile Reproach to be cast upon his holy Covenant? you will be most inexcusable before the Lord another day. If a righteous man beget a son that becometh a Robber, or an Adulterer, shall he live? he shall not live but die, and his blood shall be upon him, Ezek. 18. 10, 13. The blood of thy soul shall be upon thine own head: All the Instructions, Exhortations, Admonitions, Prayers, Examples of thy godly Parents, will be brought in as so many witnesses for thy Condemnation at the last day: yea, the

tears of thy blessed parents will be as oyl to make the everlasting flames of Hell burn the more vehemently upon thy soul, throughout the dayes of Eternity ; *The Lord will cast thee off forever.* Thy Father that begat thee, thy mother that bare thee, will not pittie thee when thou shalt be sentenced to eternal death at the last day . Remember Dives ; in Hell he lift up his eyes being in torments, and cryed, *Father Abraham have mercy on me,* but all the mercy his Father Abraham would shew to him was, *Son, Remember that in thy lifetime thou hadst thy good things ;* As if he had said, nay, thou art justly dealt with. So will thy parents say to thee, Remember that in thy life time we instructed thee, and thou hadst good Counsel given to thee many a time, but thou wouldst not regard it. O consider of it, yea know, that if thou diest in thy sins, thy godly parents will stand forth, and testifie against thee, before the Lord Jesus at the last day : As that blessed Mr. Bolton would sometimes solemnly profess to his Children, [ *h* ] *Children, let any of you meet mee at the day of Judgment in an unregenerate Christless estate if you dare, I will then testifie against you before the Lord.* Yea, thy gracious parents will joyn with the Lord Jesus in passing a Sentence of Eternal Condemnation upon thee . We read  
in

[ *h* ] See Mr. Bolton's life.

in the book of the Revelation, how the Saints say, Hallelujah, our God hath judged the great whore, righteous are his judgments, and when the smoke of her Torment rose up for ever and ever, they worshipped God & said, *Amen, Hallelujah*: Even so when the Son of God shall say to thee, Depart thou cursed wretch into everlasting fire, thy father will say, *Amen, Lord Jesus*! This is the son, this is the daughter that I have so often instructed and warned, and told them if they did not repent of sin, & get an interest in Christ, they should certainly perish for ever, but they would not hear, therefore let thy Justice be glorified for ever in their eternal Confusion. O what an heart hast thou, if ~~thou~~ break it not! Nevertheless,

Consider, 4. *There are many Children of godly parents to be seen, that do not seek the Lord God of their Fathers.* Yea, how many such are there in *New-England* that are not of their Fathers principles? If a Temptation should come it is to be feared that the greatest part of this Generation would comply, and disown that Cause which their Fathers suffered for. How many that are not of their fathers spirit, not heavenly minded, but pursuing worldly interests with their whole hearts; Nor zealous for God and his Glory, but luke warm and wofully indifferent in the matters of Religion: Nor in Practice and Conver-

Conversation like their Fathers; Not of an holy Girt Conversation, but Loose and vain, and Vile and vicious; Swearers, Gamesters, given to rioting and drunkenness, Chambering and Wantonness! Nay, how many are there before the Lord in this congregation, that never sought the God of their Fathers, even to this day! Some that never prayed in their lives, or never in earnest: You, Children, it may be you say a prayer a few words that you have been us'd to, but are you in earnest? do you cry to God as for your lives? do you take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence? O but few such!

Consider, 5. *You know not how soon your finding time may be past and gone,* therefore **NOW** seek the Lord; up and be doing lest the Sun goe down at noon and God make the day dark over thy soul: Do'it not thou know that the Lord useth to make quick work with the children of his servants, when they will not seek him, albeit they have been brought up under the solemn warnings of God? It may be he will give thee up to a reprobate sense, and his Spirit for ever cease striving with thee; then woe, woe be to thee, saith the Lord. Remember how it was of old, when the sons of God (even the Posterity of godly Seth) the posterity of eminent professors of Religion did degenerate, God said his Spirit shall strive



no longer with them, *Gen. 6. 3. my Spirit shall not alwayes strive.* --- Or death may come upon you; how many young men that have fallen down slain of late? The Sword is raging, and how are they that are of the Rising Generation *numbred for the Sword!* Deadly Arrows are flying over your heads, yea, Death is climbing in at windows, and carrying away young men apace; now if death overtake thee before thy soul be got into the *City of refuge*, it had bee good for thee never to have been born; It will be too late to seek the Lord then; If thou shouldst seek him early, thou canst not find him; when once the gates of death are shut upon thee, and thou lock'd fast under the barrs of the pit; when once thy soul is out of thy body, in a moment it shooteth the Gulf of Eternity, and then though thou shouldst seek and cry till Heaven and earth shakes; and pray and weep Seas of tears of bloud, all will be in vain. O thy soul, thy soul must lie weltring in a fiery Ocean, as long as the Eternal God shall have any Being! Can thy heart endure to think of this? No, O then seek the Lord while he may be found, Call upon him while he is near.

Something let me speak by way of Direction: briefly.

i. *Be thankful to the Lord in that he hath given you to be born of godly parents: in that you have*

have bin ( as David speaketh ) cast upon the Lord from the *womb*, & he hath been your God from your mothers belly, *Psal.* 22. 10. You might have been born of such Parents as would have nursed you up in ignorance, Profaness or Idolatry, and so your souls have been under a necessity of perishing for ever ; but the Lord hath given you to be born of parents that have designed you for God, and for his Glory. Yea it was for your sakes especially, that your Fathers ventured their lives upon the rude waves of the vast Ocean . Was it not with respect unto Posterity that our Fathers came into this Wilderness , that they might train up a Generation for Christ? Bless God that ever you had such Fathers .

2. *Plead the Lord's gracious Covenant with him,* He is very willing that you should do so : *Ask me concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me,* *Isai.* 45. 11. You say you cannot give grace to your own souls : True , But hath not the Lord in the Covenant of Grace said *I will give you a new heart* *Ezek.* 36. 26. Plead that promise, you especially that have had the Covenant sealed to you ; why should you let your Baptism lye by you as if it were of no use? Go to God in secret, and say, Lord thou hast promised to give a new heart to the Children of thy servants , and thy Covenant hath been sealed

to me in my Baptism, Oh give me a new Heart.

3. *Do not rest in any thing that is external;* Not in your relation to godly parents, and visible relation to God on that account; it is not your parents seeking unto God will save you, except you seek Him your selves also. Did not the Lord say to the children of Israel, *Are ye not as the Children of Ethiopians unto me?* Amos. 9. 7. They vainly trusted that no Destruction should ever come upon them because they were descended from blessed Ancestors: You may be as far from eternal salvation as the Children of Ethiopians for all that, if you do not serve the God of your Fathers. Therefore John Baptist said, *Think not to say, We have Abraham to our father,* Mat. 3. 9. I have known some that have been so foolish as to think they should be saved, only because they were the Children of godly parents, tho' they lived in the neglect of God, and of their own souls. Beware of so perverting the Truth delivered unto you: And rest not in being outwardly civil and blameless; was not Paul so before his conversion, *Phil.* 3. 6. And they that have been advantaged with a religious Education oftentimes are so, tho' never truly converted. Beware also of taking up a *form* of Godliness without the *power* of it. O. You that are the Children of godly Parents, if you outwardly observe the Sabbath day, and pray

pray in secret, and read the Scriptures, ( all which things I charge you in the Name of the Lord, that you attend unto them whilst you live ) you will be apt to rest here, without an Interest in the glorious Righteousness of the Son of God ; but for the love of your immortal souls, I beseech you, deceive not your selves; build not upon a false foundation, look to it in the fear of God that your hearts be perfect before him .

4. *Never leave seeking God until you find him.* Seek, & seek, & seek again, until you know that you have obtained a saving interest in Jesus Christ, and in the favour of God through him. O make thorough-work of it in the matter of your Conversion ; be not *almost* but *altogether* Christians, so shall you find that the blessing of all the Prayers, and Covenant of your gracious Parents will come upon you for evermore.

A Discourse

A DISCOURSE

Concerning the Danger of

APOSTACY.

Especiall as to those that are the *CHILDREN*  
and *POSTERITY* of such as have been  
eminent for God in their Generation.

*Delivered in a Sermon preached in the Audience  
of the General Assembly of the Massachusetts  
Colony, at Boston in New-England, May  
23. 1677. being the Day of Election there.*

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By *INCREASE MATHER.*  
Teacher of a Church in *Boston in New-England.*

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*Jer. 23. 28. He that hath my word, let him  
speak my word faithfully.*

*1. Tim. 5. 21. I charge thee before God and  
the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, that  
thou observe these things, without preferring one be-  
fore another, doing nothing by partiality.*

*Tit. 2. 15. These things speak and exhort and  
rebuke with all authority.*

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## To the Reader .

**T**He Title-Page prefixed to this Discourse, intimateth the Time and Occasion of its delivery. I had no cause to ( nor did I ) expect that it would fall to my Lot to speak, before the Choice was made ; if I had I would have used means to prevent that trouble from coming upon my self or others. But it may be God did it to prove me and see whether I would please men or Christ. And I hope I may ( in some measure ) say after the Apostle , We are bold in our God to speak . Our Exhortation was not of Deceit, but even so we speak not as pleasing men but God, which tryeth our hearts . For neither at any time used we flattering words, nor of men sought we glory, That great Reformer in Scotland, when upon his Death-bed, could say with comfort, That I did forbear none of what Condition soever, I did it out-of the fear of my God, who hath placed me in the Function of his Ministry, and I know will bring me to an account. Even so I must confess, the awful sense of the great opportunity which the Lord put into my hands to discharge my Conscience, in being witness to His Name and Truth, and of the account which I certainly know I must give to Him, caused me to speak as I did . ( And to avoid more controversial discourses ) There is indeed one particular insisted on, which is now become a matter of Scruple

and

## To the Reader.

and distast to some amongst us, viz. that which concerns the Magistrates power in matters of Religion. But as it was by me either intended or expressed, I know not to this hour why any one should be offended at it. I may better speak in this cause than some others, as having my self had experience what it is to have Conscience imposed on, and therefore would be loth that any truly conscientious should be burdened; and it is sufficient known that I have a greater latitude and Indulgence in the point of Toleration, than many better than my self have. Nevertheless I judge it most unreasonable that pretended Liberty of Conscience should be an Asylum for the profanest errors to take Sanctuary in: As though men must therefore have Liberty to profane Sabbaths or Sacraments, or set up an Altar against the Lord's Altar, and their Threshold by his Threshold, & their Posts by his Posts, when and where they please: It cannot be but the Lord will be provoked at such things, especially in New-England where men are not under such temptations to forsake their Assembling themselves together, as in some other places: And where Zeal on the other hand hath been notorious, so that such Lukewarmness will in a People circumstanced as we are, be an evidence of Apostacy.

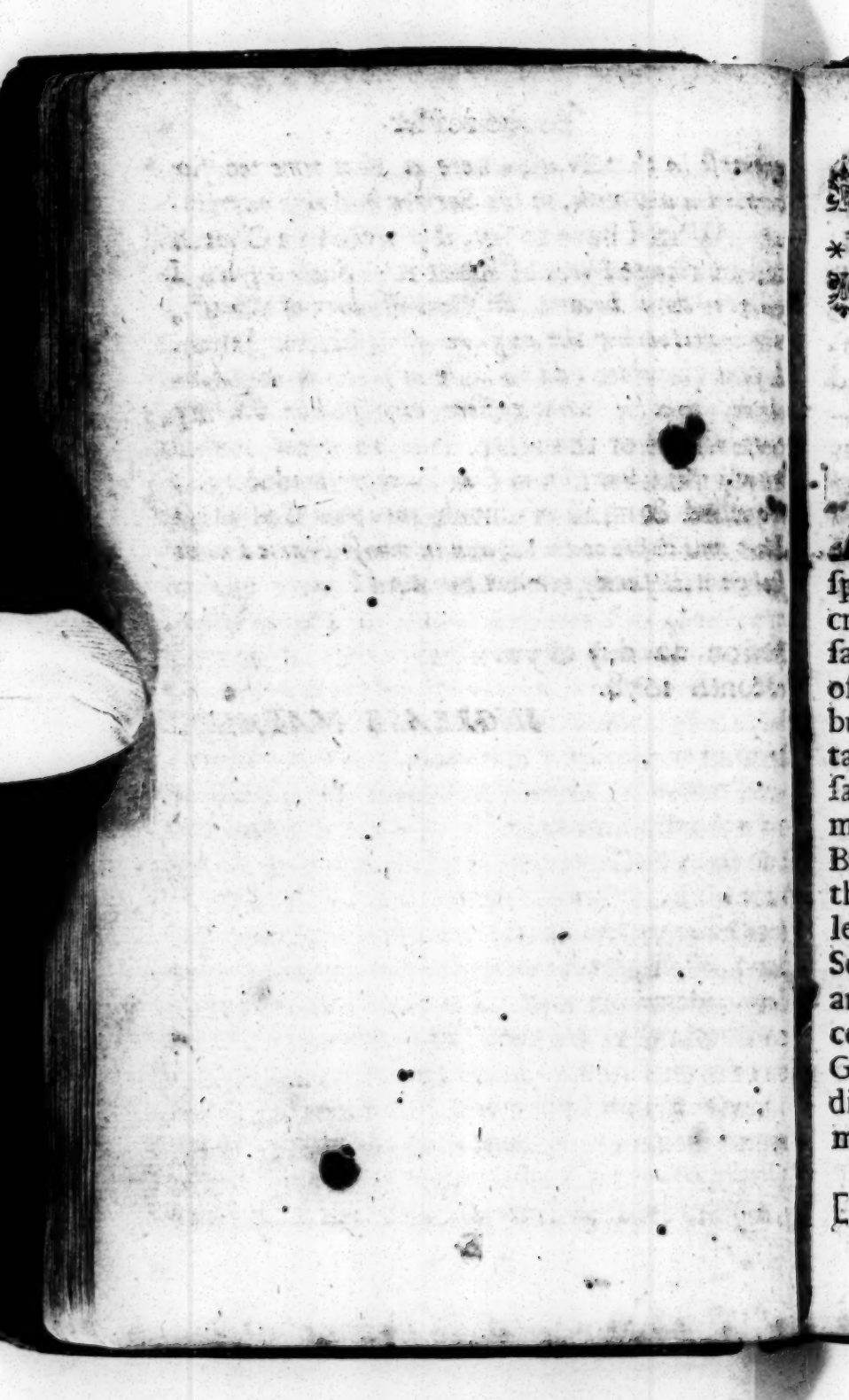
I remember I had once the Happiness to be acquainted with an eminent Divine in another part of the world, who having an opportunity to give his Testimony against a prevailing Evil which the  
greatest

To the reader.

greatest in that Nation were at that time too far carried away with, in his Sermon had this expression. What I have to say, if it were in a Church full of Kings I would speak it. Such a spirit I believe doth become an Embassador of Christ, when delivering the message of his Master Jesus. I shall therefore add no more at present, only conclude, that if what is here expressed be but my own words or thoughts, it is no great matter what's said, but if it be (as I am perswaded it is) the word & mind of Christ, then that God whose I am and desire to serve, and in whose Name I have spoken will surely confirm his word.

Boston, 22. day of 5 2.  
Month 1678.

INCREASE MATHER.





1. Chron. 28. 9.

*But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off  
for ever.*

**A**S there is a peculiar Excellency in all the Books of Scripture, becoming the Majesty of their Author; so it is in special manner true with respect unto this Sacred Book of *Chronicles*: which is [a] not the same with those *Chronicles* we sometimes read of in the *Kings*, those being civil Records, but these wholly of a divine Inspiration, containing the History of no less than three Thousand & five Hundred years; even from the first man Adam unto the Jews Return from the Babylonish Captivity, and many years after that also. . . The Hebrews suppose it ( or at least some part of it ) to be the last Book of Scripture that was written, and therefore they are wont to place it last in their Bibles, as the concluding Book of the Old Testament. The Greeks entitle it [ *ton parateipomenon* ] Because diverse things most worthy of eternal Commemoration are related in these books, which  
are

[ a ] See the English & Dutch Annot.

are no where else to be found. So in this Chapter we have Davids Solemn Dying Exhortation: words which deserve to be recorded, and yet are no where else seen ( at least wise not in that ample manner ) but in this Chapter . And it was, in a very solemn Assembly that these words were spoken, indeed in a *General Assembly*, when all the Lords people both as to Civil and Ecclesiastical order were come together for the Establishment of another Ruler amongst them; accordingly David doth here direct his Exhortation, first to the representatives of the people, *ver. 1.* *And David assembled all the Princes of Israel, the Princes of the Tribes, and the Captains of the Companies unto themselves &c.* Hence they are said to be all Israel, *ver. 8.* *in the sight of all Israel h. e.* the Heads and Representatives of all Israel, and therefore are said to be the *Congregation of the Lord*. Often in Scripture by the *Congregation*, the Heads and Rulers of the Congregations are meant. Now the Exhortation unto them is that they would *keep and seek all the Commandments of the Lord, h. e.* that they would observe what they did know, and seek to know more of the mind of God. The motive whereby he urgeth this is, because the Lord had promised the good Land to them; but it was upon that condition of their keeping his Commandments, therefore it did highly concern them to be careful in that matter.

2dly, he directs his Exhortation to him that was to be established as chief Ruler, *scil.* to his son Solomon, whom God appointed to succeed his Father in the Government: Now Sincerity was the main thing which David his Father did exhort him unto, in the beginning of this verse, *And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.* This is further urged from three motives,

1. From the Consideration of the divine Omnipesciency, *For the Lord searcheth the hearts & understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.*

2. From the benefit and good which would follow upon seeking to the Lord, *if thou seek him he will be found of thee.*

3. From the evil that is in forsaking him; In the words now before us; which though they were spoken to Solomon, yet were they of equal Concernment unto others, being circumstanced as he was, *b. e.* that were of the younger succeeding generation, being also the Children and posterity of godly Parents. Especially the words did and do concern those that are the *Posterity of David*, that is to say, of those that have bin eminent Servants of God in their Generation. The Doctrine which I would therefore ( by the help of Christ ) insist on as Conceiving that it may not be altogether unsutable for this great Audience, is this,

Doct. *That if they who are the Children and Posterity of God's eminent Servants shall forsake the Lord, he will cast them off for ever.*

In the doctrinal handling of this Truth, there are four things which may be briefly enquired into. 1. When men, especially the Children of Gods servants, may be said to forsake him. 2. What is implied in this casting off for ever? 3. What forsaking of God that is, which will be attended with such Casting off. 4. The Reason of this dreadful Procedure of the Most High towards the Posterity of His People.

Quest. 1. *When may men be said to forsake the Lord?*

Answ. 1. *When they depart from the blessed Truths of God, then they may be said to forsake him.* Hence the Apostle chargeth it upon the apostatizing Galatians that they were removed from him that called them Chap. 1. 6. *h. e.* they had forsaken God himself, because they had corrupted and forsaken the great Truths of the Gospel. All Truth is from God, therefore he is styled *the God of Truth*, Deut. 32. 4. *Yea, Truth, it self*, 1. Joh. 5. 6. And Truth is said to be his Name. Christ said to his faithful ones in the Church of Pergamus, *thou holdest fast my Name*. Rev. 2. 13. The Truths of Christ were much opposed by the Infidels, and

and by the Hereticks of those dayes, only some did faithfully adhere thereunto; and these are said to hold fast his Name. so then to forsake the Truth, is to forsake the Lord's Name. Especially when there is Apostacy from great foundation-Truths in Religion; the Lord is forsaken. Albeit every truth hath the Name of God stamped upon it, yet there are some Truths which have more of his Name on them than others have, that the disowning of them is absolutely to reject the Lord, namely Fundamental Truths, which indeed are not many, nor hard to be known. Moreover when those Truths are disowned by children, which their Fathers were eminently engaged in the profession of, (tho' they should not be fundamental as in their natures) such Children may be said to forsake the Lord.

2. *When men Deifie any other Object besides the Lord.* They that set up other things in God's stead, in their so doing forsake the Lord; so it is when men give religious worship to any other besides him, who alone ought to be feared. Thus the children of Israel because they did worship *Baal* and *Ashtoroth*, h. e. the [b] *Sun* and *Moon* (for those were the first Creatures that the Gentiles Idolized, & the Syrians call'd the Sun *Baal* & the Moon *Ashtoroth*) they

[b] *Corn. a Lapide in locum Luciae de deo Syria Herod. Lib. 5.*



they are therefore charged with Forsaking God, *Judg. 2. 12. 13.* Idolatry is the greatest Apostacy in the world: Such are by way of eminency styled *forsakers of God*, *Deut. 32. 15.* *He forsook God*, meaning that they did apostatize to Idolatry, therefore in *ver. 16.* it is added that *they provoked him to Jealousie with their strange gods*, that is to say with new gods or Idols, (for new things are strange) *ver. 17.* *they sacrificed to new gods, which came newly up, whom their Fathers feared not.* And this is true not only with respect unto that more grosse Idolatry when men shall avow the service of Idols, but also Concerning secret, spiritual, Heart-Idolatry, even worldliness, *Mat. 6. 24.* *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.* The servants of Mammon *b. e.* of the world, are forsakers of God, when men pour out the strength of their affections upon worldly objects, Or place their cheif Delight and Confidence in these things, it argues an heart departure from the Lord *Jer. 17. 5.* If Fathers have sought Christ and the things of Christ in the first place, and their Children shall come after them, and espouse a worldly Interest, it is a woful God-forsaking.

3. *There is a forsaking God in respect of his holy Institutions*, Hence a people that are without Ordinances, are said to be without God, *2. Chron. 15. 3.* it is there mentioned that *Isra-*

*Israel had for a long season been without the true God, because they had been without the Ministry and without Ordinances. If these be not duly observed the Lord is forsaken, Isai. 65. 11. but ye are they that forsake the Lord, and forget my holy mountain, so that to forget the holy Mountain b. e. the neglect of Divine worship and Ordinances, is a Forsaking of the Lord. Look as when the Lord doth deprive a people of his Ordinances, He is said to forsake them, Jer. 23. 33. I will even forsake you saith the Lord; the meaning is (saith Calvin) you shall no more have Ministry and Ordinances among you; so when they are willing to be deprived thereof, they may be said to forsake him, Judg. 10. 6. they forsook the Lord and served him not. Not to regard the Service of God is to Forsake him. For in Ordinances we have to do with God, Heb. 4. 13. in Hearing the Word, in Prayer, in Sabbaths, in Sacraments we have to do with God.*

*Or if his holy Ordinances be Corrupted, then the Lord is forsaken. And it is so when men will be adding their Inventions to Gods Institutions, Psal. 106. 39. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own Inventions. When men follow their own inventions, they go a whoring from the Lord: of this nature were the high places of Old, 2. Chon. 33. 17. The people did sacrifice in the high places, yet to the Lord their*

*their God only.* † Those high places were lawful to worship God in until the Temple was built, but after that, it was a breach of the second Commandment to place any religion in them, and therefore in some Degree a Departure from the Lord. If Fathers have prized Ordinances above the world, and endeavoured to uphold them in their power and purity, but their children after them shall not regard whether they enjoy the ordinances of Christ or no, or if they do, shall not be careful and studious to keep them pure, according to Scripture Rule, they fall under this dreadful Charge of *Apostacy* from God.

4. *There is a forsaking of God in respect of Conversation.* There are that by works deny God, *Tit. 1. 16.* An holy Heavenly Conversation is expressed in the Scripture by that of *walking with God*, *Gen. 5. 24.* and *6. 9.* Therefore an evil Conversation is a departure from God. It is called a forsaking the Law of the Lord, *Jer. 9. 13.* By a corrupt Conversation men deviate from the Law, and are such Apostates as the Text speaks of: In this respect those wicked men whose foundation was destroyed with the flood, (as Eliphaz speaketh) even the sinners of the old World were Apostates from God. We do not read of

† See *Engl. Annot. on 1. Sam. 6. 14.*

of (nor do I believe that there was) any Idolatry in the old World, but they were over run with Atheism, Pride, Sensuallity, Unclean-ness, Oppression, and the like scandalous Enormities. And the Apostacy of the Children of Israel did Consist partly in this, as we see in that woful instance of the *Benjamites*, the greatest part of whom the Lord cast off for ever. Yea, and the Antichristian Apostacy predicted in the New Testament doth consist partly in this: We know that the Antichristian Generation (Papists I mean are generally not only (as all of them are) horribly superstitious and idolatrous, but of most debauched & profane consciences & conversations: In the *Revelations* were ad of their Murthers, Sorceries, Fornications, Thefts, *Chapt. 9. 21.* If then the Children of the Covenant shall not walk worthy of God, but in the wayes of Pride, Sensuallity, Unrighteousnes; if when Fathers have been of an holy, exemplary Conversation, their Children shall be unholy and prophane, they are forsakers of God, concerning whom he hath threatned to cast them off for ever, *1. Sam. 8. 3.*

3. When the Fear of God is wanting in the hearts of such as are above others bound to fear and serve him, They are Forsakers of the Lord. For there is an inward heart-departure from God, as well as that which is outward and visible

visible: So it is when there is no Faith nor fear of God in the heart, *Heb. 3. 12. Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Infidelity in the heart is the Root of all Apostacy. If the Children of godly Parents shall not endeavour truly to fear and serve the Lord God of their Fathers, they are such as do forsake him, yea, and such as he will cast off for ever. And therefore in this Context David did intimate unto his son Solomon, that if he did not serve the Lord even with a perfect heart, he should be cast off for ever.

We proceed therefore to the second Question, *Viz.*

Quest. 2. *What is imply'd in this Casting off for ever?*

Ans. 1. *It Implies a Change as to divine Dispensations.* In the Scripture, when the Lord threatned to cast off his people, that is intended *viz.* that he would make an alteration as to the tenour of his Dispensations towards them: here it is set in opposition to *finding God*, if thou seek him, he will be *found* of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off: Now *finding God* doth Imply the enjoyment of his favour, and therefore *in casting off* is implied the Deprivation of the Lords favourable presence. It is indeed most true, that the special favour of God is unchangeable, *Rom. 5. 2. This*  
*grace*



*Grate wherein we stand.* He that hath once access into the special grace and favour of God, stands and abideth therein for ever, in respect of that there is no casting off for ever: In the Covenant of grace the Lord hath promised saying, *I will not cast off the seed of Israel for all that they have done,* Jer. 31. 37. But then there is common favour, in respect of outward blessings, which are the effects of common love, and that may utterly cease *Hos. 9. 15. I will love them no more.* I have loved them, (saith the Lord, *b. e.* bestowed outward mercies on them, but I will do so no more. They shall have no more such dayes of peace, no more such plenty, no more such means of grace as once they did enjoy. Thus of a freind, the Lord may turn to be an enemy, *Isai. 63. 10. But they Rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.* Whilst a Covenant people carry it so as not to break Covenant, the Lord blesseth them visibly, but if they degenerate, then blessings are removed, and woful Judgments come in their room, and that's implied in this *Casting off* which the Text speakes of, *scil.* that mercyes shall be taken away: As it was said of Saul that when God cast him off, he took away his mercy from him, *1. Chron. 17. 13.* because he was deprived of that great outward Blessing and Dignity which once he did enjoy. And the sending of contrary miseries

to those mercies, that instead of peace, there shall be wars, instead of plenty poverty, instead of health terrible sicknesses, instead of Planting, Plucking up and destroying, these things are implied in this *Casting off*; thus psal. 89. 38. *But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.* I conceive the Psalmist in those words hath [c] respect to the sad Change of Providence which befel the Lords People in Rehoboam's time, for that psalm was written by *Ethan*, who was contemporary with Solomon, & probably lived to see the woful Changes which hapned five years after Solomons death, when the Land was invaded and sorely wasted by Heathen Enemies, and some (tho not all) of the wrath of God Poured out upon his people, and upon the apostatized Children of David; Strong holds were brought to ruin, and they did not stand in the day of Battle as in former times they had done, now these temporal Judgments are called a *Casting off*.

2. *It doth Imply a-discovenanting and unchurching.* If the Children of godly Fathers shall forsake the Lord, he will cast them off, *b. e.* It will at last come to this, that the Lord will disown them, and excommunicate them, and say they are none of his; for although there is no falling from a state of Saving grace, yet they

[c] *Feord in locum:*

they that have only a visible Interest in God, may fall from that Estate, *what they have shall be taken from them.* They that are internally and sincerely in Covenant with God, shall never lose their interest in the Covenant, for they are *betrothed unto the Lord for ever; Hos.*

2. 19. But they that are externally in Covenant may cease to be the Lords visible people; Thus it came to pass Concerning the Ten Tribes. Hence the Lord speaketh as *Jer. 3. 8. Back-sliding Israel committed adultery, and I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce.* so that the marriage Covenant which was between the Lord and them them was dissolved, this is confirmed by the Prophet *Hosea, Cap. 2. 2.* where the Lord saith *plead with your mother, plead for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband,* so in *Chapt. 1. ver. 9. Call his name Lo-Ammi for ye are not my people and I will not be your God,* therefore also the Lord by the Prophet *Ezekiel* calls the ten Tribes by the name of *Abolab.* The two Tribes, the Jews, were then called by the name of *Abolibah,* which signifieth *my Tent,* because as yet God had not rejected them. But the ten Tribes are called *Abola* which signifieth *a Tent,* as if the Lord had said, they are none of mine, now I have done with them and utterly rejected them; *Ezek. 23. 4.* Afterwards the Jews also were discovenanted and unchurched. The Prophet *Zechariah* had fore told, that upon  
their

their unbelief, in rejecting Jesus Christ the only true Messias, it should be so, *I took my staff Beauty and cut it assunder, that I might break my Covenant which I had made with all the people, Zech. 11. 10.* And Paul tells us, that sad prediction was fulfilled, therefore *Rom. 11. 12.* he speaketh of *the fall* of the Jews; meaning that they were fallen from their visible Church estate to be in the same condition which the Gentile World was in before the coming of Christ, so that they were fallen from Heaven to earth; and in *ver. 20, 21, 22.* he speaks of their being *broken off and cut off*, h. e. cut off from the visible Church. The Apostle [d] in that Chapter doth compare covenanting Abraham to a Root, and the visible Church to an Olive tree, of which there are two sorts of Branches, First *Natural*, viz. the Jewish Church; Secondly *Ingraffed*, i. e. the Church among the Gentiles. Now the natural branches were broken off: and therefore in the New Testament they are declared to be none of the Lords people *Rev. 3. 9.* *They call themselves Jews, but are not so, but are of the Synagogue of Satan.* They say they are Jews, h. e. they boast of their being the Lords people, but in truth they are not so, (saith Christ) they glory in the Name of a Synagogue, but now they are not God's Synagogue but Satan's.

And

[d] See *Mr. Cotton of Infant Baptism.*

And in these dayes of the New Testament the Lord hath disowned and unchurched these and those that once were his own people, *Rev. 2. 5. I will remove the candlestick out of his place* that threatning is not only fulfilled on Ephesus; but on all the Churches in Asia; there have been in former Ages bright and glorious Candlesticks in that part of the world, but they are long since all broken to peices. Also the Romish Antichristian Idolatry hath greatly prevailed amongst Christians for above these Thousand years, and as for them that are overrun there with, Christ doth declare them to be looked upon as Gentiles, as Heathens, and they are not to be lookt upon as within the Temple, or as indeed appertaining to the visible Church, *Rev. 11. 2.* And this disowning & unchurching a people is called a *Casting off*.

3. The Expression here doth Imply everlasting Rejection in the other world. The Hebrew Phrase [*jazni chaka lagnad*] Arias Montanus translateth *execrabitur te in aeternum*, if thou forsake him he will make thee an eternal execration. Though it be a deep truth that the line of Election [*†*] doth for the most part run through the loyns of godly parents, yet not only so, for men may be descended from godly Parents and progenitors, and yet be the subjects of eternal Reprobation & Damnation

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[*†*] See the preceding Sermon pag. 39.



*Mat. 8. 12. The Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.* We read of one that could call Abraham *his* Father, and unto whom Abraham said *Son* remember that in thy Life time thou hadst thy good things, that nevertheless when he died went to the place of Torment. If such Children forsake the Lord, it is not the prayers nor tears of godly Fathers that will save them; Nay these will be an infinite aggravation of their misery. The tears of a godly father, if his Children forsake the Lord, will make the flames of Eternal fire burn the more fiercely upon their souls for ever. Therefore well might David say to his son Solomon *If thou forsake the Lord he will cast thee off for ever.*

We come in the next place to enquire  
*What Forsaking of God is that, that will be attended with this Casting off?*

Answe. In two words, 1. *This must be understood concerning deep departures from God, and from his blessed waies, Hos. 9. 9. They have deeply corrupted themselves, therefore he will visit their sins.* The Lord is the God of Patience, and of all grace, and thence is very slow in rejecting utterly a people (or their posterity) whom he hath once taken into Covenant with himself: Hence it is not lesser Departures, but high and great Offences against the Lord that provoke him to cast off his people, *E. G. Idolatry is a sin that causeth the Rejection which*

which the text speaks of. Yea, it is true with reference unto that Idolatry which is against the Second Commandment: When the Children of Israel committed that Idolatry respecting the Calf in the Wilderness, they sinned against the Second Commandment, for they would worship the Lord still, only they would do it in such a way and by such means as God never appointed, and they were in great danger of being cast off for this sin. Hence the Lord said to Moses, *Thy People have corrupted them selves*, Exodus 32. 7. The Lord doth not say *my* people as he was wont to do, but *thy* people, as if it were said; Now they have violated my Covenant, and deserve that I should for ever disown and reject them. The Asian Churches have been cast off for this sin especially; we may read the sin of those Churches written in dreadful Characters, upon the Forehead of that Judgment that hath destroy'd them all: God has let loose the barbarous Turks upon them, who hate and destroy no men so much as those that worship Images. And as for the Church of Rome, the Apostle Paul did solemnly predict that they should be cast off *Rom. 11. 22.* Now it is for this sin principally that the Lord hath cast them off. Again Heresie causeth this Casting off which the Text speaketh of, Societies consisting of such as disown the Fundamental Truths of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus dis-

disowns them. Hence the Jews are disowned and rejected by the Lord, for although they own some fundamental truths in Religion, indeed all [e] those six principles mentioned by the Apostle to the Hebrews (*Cap. 6. 1, 2.*) the Jews acknowledge; yet there are other foundation Truths which they reject; That Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, That Messiah is God as well as man, The Doctrine of Original sin, and of Salvation by Imputed Righteousness, all which things are necessary to be believed in order to eternal Life, these do they reject and disown, and therefore the Lord has cast them off. When a people shall be so far degenerate as to lose the Essentials of Religion, they are the Lord's no longer. Heretical Assemblies may be the flocks of those that pretend to be *Christ's Companions*, but they are none of *Christ's flocks Cant. 1. 7.* So for scandalous miscarriages in life & conversation, these provoke the Lord to cast off a professing people. In a Building, if once the materials be rotted and Corrupted, the house will moulder away, the matter being an Essential Cause: And in Church building we know that Saints are the material Cause and therefore Scandal in Life doth destroy the Essentials of a Church, and so brings along with it this Casting off spoken of in the Text.

Secondly

[e] *Jac. Capellus in Hebr. 6. 1.*

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2. *It is an Impenitent, Incorrigible Forsaking God,* that doth cause him to cast off a people or person. Solomon was guilty ( notwithstanding the solemn, dying charge of his Father to the Contrary ) of dreadful forsakings and Apostacies from the Lord but he repents of them, as we see by the Book of the *Ecclesiastes*, & therefore y<sup>e</sup> Lord did not wholly cast him off for ever. Notwithstanding great degeneracy in a people the Lord is not wont to Cast them off until he hath used all means for their Recovery; so it was with the Children of Israel of old 2. *Chron* 36. 15. The Scripture hath recorded the names of above Twenty Prophets which the Lord sent to his people of Old to tell them of their back-slidings, and call upon them to repent and reform, before he would cast them off. And though in these dayes of the new Testament, because men sin against greater light and grace than in former times, the Lord Jesus maketh Quicker work with an apostatizing people, than in the dayes of Old, and in the years of ancient Generations; & therefore he said to the Church in Ephesus, except thou consider whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe the first works, I will come against thee quickly and remove the Candlestick out of his place: Nevertheless he useth meanes to reduce and recover a backsliding people before he casts them off, so he did with the Asian Churches, and so hath he done with the Anti-Christian.



Antichristian Generation, and therefore raised up great Instruments, who have preached the everlasting Gospel with a loud voice and, called for reformation; and might therefore say [f] as Jer. 31. 9. *We would have healed Babylon and she is not healed, therefore her Judgment reacheth unto Heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.* The Lord doth give a first and second Admonition before he doth reject: He tryeth what his word will doe, what lesser and greater Judgements will doe, yea and what mercies and deliverances will doe, and if nothing will prevail then he casts off for ever. If a generation be Apostate, and incorrigibly Apostate, it will not be long before the Lord doth cast them off for ever, Jer. 15. 6. 7. *Thou hast forsaken me saith the Lord, thou art gone backward, therefore will I stretch out mine hand against thee I will destroy my people sith they return not from their ways.* In a word, when Apostacy is total and final, then the Lord does reject men, yea, tho' the Children and posterity of his own servants, he casts them off for ever.

QUEST. *But why so?*

ANSW. For such Reasons as these.

REAS. 1. Because the Transgressions of such Children as the Doctrine speaks of are peculiar

[f] Notante Parkero, de Polit. Eccles.  
et Rainold de Idol. Romana Ecclesia.



peculiar provocations ; if the children of *David* sin, their Iniquity is attended with special aggravations : They sin against greater light, and love, and grace, than may be said of any persons in the world besides : They that rebel against the light, do at last provoke the Lord utterly to reject them. Hence it is that refusing Instruction, is mentioned as the grand procuring Cause of this Rejection, *Jer. 6. 8.* *Be instructed, O Jerusalem lest my soul depart from thee, and thou become desolate.* Now thus it is when the Children of Godly parents forsake the Lord, as Solomon doth acknowledge, how diligent and faithful his blessed Father had him in instructing of him, *Pro. 4. 3, 4.* *I was my Father's son, he taught me also, and said unto me keep my Commandments and live.* And sins against grace and peculiar mercy do without Repentance end in everlasting Rejection, *Amos 3. 2.* *You only have I known ---- therefore will I punish you for all your Iniquities.* Who ever escape (saith the Lord) to be sure you shall not, because you sin against greater grace and favour than any others in the world ever did. For these causes the Lord threatned Eli that he would cut off his Arm, and the Arm of his Fathers house, inasmuch as he had sinned against peculiar mercies and favours. Especially, sins against Tenders of Gospel-grace, provoke the Lord to cast men off, *Mat. 23. 37, 38.* *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have*

gathered you, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings but ye would not, and now your house is left unto you desolate. And this is sadly true concerning the children of godly parents, they sin against special Favours from the Lord, the means of grace is vouchsafed to them, they have many blessed strivings of the Holy spirit with them which others have not, therefore if they forsake the Lord, no wonder if he cast them off for ever.

*Reas. 2.* Because such Children are guilty of lamentable Covenant-breaking before the Lord for the Covenant is with Children as well as parents, *Dent. 29. 10, 11, 12.* You and your little ones doe enter into Covenant. Upon this account David saith that the Lord was his God from his Infancy, yea, from his first coming into the world, *Psal. 22. 10.* And the like is noted concerning Solomon, and therefore his Father said to him, *My son build the house of the Lord thy God.* *1. Chron. 22. 11.* The Lord is not only my God, but in respect of his gracious Covenant he is thy God also. And this seems to be the reason why Abraham is styled the Father of the Faithful. [g] Not meerly on the Account of the eminency of his faith, for we read of others in Scripture whose faith was not inferior to his, but in that he was the first

[g] See Mr. Carter *Abraham's Covenant opened.*

first unto whom God expressly declared, *I will be a God to thee and to thy seed*, and withal appointed a sacred sign and seal of this Covenant. Now Abraham's Covenant is as to the substance of it *Everlasting*: And therefore the Children of the faithful in all Ages, are wrapped under the Bond of the Covenant, otherwise there would be a substantial Change of the Covenant from what it was at first, than which nothing can be more contradictory to the whole tenor and current of the Scripture. The Apostle therefore testifies that the blessing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, Gal. 3. 14. As God said unto Abraham, I take thee & thy children into Covenant with my self, so does He through Jesus Christ say the like to every believing Parent among the Gentiles. And therefore the Lord Jesus did affirm concerning Children, of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 19. 14. [b] It is not only true (saith Christ) that Children did belong to God under the Old Testament, but now, that the Kingdom of heaven is at hand, now that the Church is to be under the Heavenly Dispensation of the Gospel, Children must be acknowledged there also. And it is for ever to be observed, that when the New Testament dispensation was ready to be establish'd, the Ancient Grant concerning Childrens interest in

[h] Mr. Burroughs on Matth. 5. 3. pag. 61.

in the Covenant is expressly confirmed, *Act. 2, 39. The Promise is to you and to your Children.* Hence then, if such Children do forsake the Lord, they are guilty of violating the Covenant. Now that's an Iniquity which does provoke the Lord to cast off those that are deeply guilty of it, *Isa. 24, 5, 6. They have broken the everlasting Covenant, therefore they are cursed, burned, desolate.* In old time it was the manner when a Covenant was made, some creature or other was killed, and cut in peices, by which Rite was signified, that the Lord would kill and cut off him, that being in Covenant with God, did not make conscience faithfully to keep and observe that Covenant inviolable for ever.

*Reas. 3.* From that infinite Indignation which is in the Lord's Heart against Apostates. They are Fugitives from Christ, and deserting their Captain the Lord himself will execute Martial law upon them: No sinners are greater objects of Divine hatred and indignation. Hence the Apostle said to the Hebrews, when some of them were ready to apostatize from Christianity to Judaism, *If any man draw back the soul of God shall take no pleasure in him.* *Heb. 10, 38.* meaning that such creatures are vessels of dishonour, and the most loathsome Objects that can be thought of. Hence the Lord doth pursue them with infinite vengeance, he cuts them off and casts them off for ever. As that



that miserable *Spir* at the very moment, when he had renounced the Truth, thought he heard one say to him, *Hence thou Apostate, and receive the Sentence of thy eternal Damnation.* The Lord is wont to leave marks of his wrath upon such sinners. He brands them that all, the world may be afraid of that Iniquity: Seldom has it been known that any have notoriously turned away from the Lord, but visible wrath from heaven has fallen upon them. *Seboram* had been religiously educated under his godly Father *Jehoshaphat*, but he proved the Apostate Child of a Gracious Father; and what came on him? God let loose the Heathen Arabians, who wasted his estate and murdered all his children save one: Thus did the Lord cast him off. *Joash* was religiously educated under his uncle *Jehoiadak*, but he forsook the Lord, therefore the Assyrians with a small Army destroyed a great Host of his; Afterwards his own treacherous servants murdered him. The like we read concerning *Amaziah*. And Histories (besides what is recorded in Scripture) are full of awful and amazing Examples of the Lords indignation against Apostates, and therefore since if Davids Children do forsake the Lord, they are to be reckoned among the number of Apostates, no wonder that He doth threaten to Cast them off for ever.

We



We proceed now to a word of Application, and shall insist upon one only

Use of Exhortation.

Let us be exhorted in the Name and Fear of God this day, to endeavour that it may not be with us as the Text and Doctrine expresseth; let us every one in our several places and Capabilities endeavour that the present and succeeding Generations in New-England, may not forsake the Lord God of their Fathers, and so endanger their being cast off for ever.

Wherefore Consider. 1. *What Fathers and Predecessours have been,* they were such as did seek the Lord. As for the body of the present Generation in New-England, It may be said to them, your Fathers were such as did serve the Lord: yea, it was love to God and to Jesus Christ which brought them into this Wilderness as the Lord speaks Jer. 2. 2. *I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine Espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness, in a Land which was not sown.* Our Fathers did not in their coming hither propound any great matter to themselves respecting this world; only that they should have liberty to serve God, and to walk with him in all the wayes of his Worship. As one of our Worthies has aptly expressed, God sifted three Nations, that so he might bring over choice Grain into this Wilderness. Let us then remember, what New-England hath been: It hath

hath been a noble Plant, *Jer. 2. 21. I planted thee a noble Vine, wholly a right seed.* It hath been Cedar, our eyes have seen the Lord fulfilling that Scripture literally and gloriously, *Isai. 41. 19. I will plant in the wilderness a Cedar.* The chief of the Fathers in these New-English Churches they were *Abrahams*: He, when God called him removed out of *Ur of the Chaldees* to the place which the Lord would shew him, there built an Altar to the everlasting God, did our Fathers remove out of their own land when God called them, and came hither to build an Altar here to the Everlasting God, yea, and they have set the Altar upon its right Basis too. Our Fathers have been *Dauids*, that is to say, *eminent Reformers*. Let me speak freely (without offence to any) there never was a generation that did so perfectly shake off the dust of Babylon, both as to Ecclesiastical and Civil Constitution, as the first Generation of Christians that came into this Land for the Gospels sake. Where was there ever a place so like unto New Jerusalem as New-England hath been? It was once *Dr. Twiss* his Opinion [i] that when New Jerusalem should come down from Heaven *America* would be the seat of it. Truly that such a Type and Embleme of New Jerusalem, should be erected in

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[i] See *Dr. Twiss's Letters* printed in *Mr. Mather's works*, Lib. 4. Epist. 42. pag. 979.

so dark a corner of the world, is matter of deep Meditation and Admiration.

Consider, 2. *How subject men are, yea the Children of blessed parents and Predecessours, to apostatize from God.* It is possible that the Children of David may forsake the Lord, and that in a short time too: when Predecessors have been eminent for God, their Successors have been most degenerate, Jer. 2. 21. *I planted thee wholly a right seed. how art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me!* Isai. 1. 21. *How is the faithful-City become an Harlot! it was full of Judgement, Righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.* It was sometimes said unto good Samuel, *Thy sons walk not in thy waies.* And it is noted Concerning Nabab (a drunken Sot) that he was of the house of Caleb, 1. Sam. 25. 3. That ever such a branch should spring out of such a stock! The Ephraimites were the vilest Idolaters of all the apostate Children of Israel, yet they were the posterity of Joseph, the best of Jacobs twelve sons. The Perfidious and ingrateful Ziphites were also the posterity of that blessed Caleb but now mentioned. Yea, it is a sad Truth that Religion has seldome been upheld in the power of it, for above one or two Generations together. Therefore it is recorded concerning the Children of Israel, *they turned quickly out of the way which their Fathers walked in, obeying the Commandments of the Lord, but they*

*they did not so*, Judges 2. 17. The Fathers and Leaders both of the first and second Generation were for purity of worship, but their children were *not so*. Their Fathers did endeavour to uphold Religion in the Power of it, but *their children did not so*. Their Fathers did order their Conversations according to the holy Rules of the word of God, but *their children did not so*. Hence is that sad Complaint by the Prophet, *they rose early and corrupted their doings*, Zeph. 3. 7. And if we look into the Scripture and view the Story of former Ages, we shall see this to be true. The posterity of the Lords Servants, the Children of the Church have in a little time so forsaken him, as that solemn Reformation has been necessary: Look beyond the Flood and we shall see it so. One of Adam's children with all his numerous posterity forsook the Lord: Cain was Excommunicate out of the Church and became the Father of an Excommunicate Race and Generation. The first Church that ever was in the world, even that in Adam's Family continued in some measure pure, about the space of [k] an Hundred and thirty years, (*b. e.* until Seth was born) but then great Apostacy prevailed. When the Church was small in one Family it was more easie to keep it pure, by casting out the Apostates, but now

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[k] *Quæst. de Theol. Lib. 2. Cap. 20. in A. ed.*



the world grew numerous, and a multitude of sinners caused impunity in sin, so as that they that were godly and conscientious were sain in the very beginning or first Ages and Generations of the world to seperate themselves and become distinct Societies. Hence is that *Gen. 4. 26. then began men to call upon the Name of the Lord.* It noteth a Separation of the Church from the profane world. After this a second Apostacy followed, that the Church and world were mixed together, even the *sons of God and daughters of men*, the Posterity of godly *Seth* & of wicked *Cain*, untill such time as the flood came and cleared the world of them, *Gen. 6. 2.* Then were the inhabitants of the earth in a most corrupt estate, wherefore the Psalmist (as it seems) alluding to that time; saith *The Lord looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God, every one of them is gone back, they are altogether become filthy. Psa. 53. 2, 3.* After Religion was revived in Noah's Family, his posterity quickly forsook the Lord, *Cham's* Apostacy was (as some learned men observe) about forty years after the flood: The Church was reformed by his ejection, but within sixty or seventy years after that, the Builders of *Babel* set upon their wicked attempt, which was desperate Rebellion against the Lord, although *Noah* himself was then alive, he could not by all his Authority restrain his Grand-children and



and posterity, but they would needs become guilty of that Babel defection. After this within a few Generations the world was overrun with Idolatry. When that iniquity first began is hard to say, but it is evident that in Jobs time ( who is thought to live about three hundred and fifty years after the flood ) the world was filled with Idolaters, yea, in *Abraham's* time there was such Apostacy as the Religion was almost gone out of the world. Only in his Family there was a pure Church Established: Yet his posterity did quickly forsake the Lord. The *Ishmaelites*, *Midianites*, *Edomites*, ( and other Nations ) who were of the Posterity of Abraham the Father of the faithful, in a few generations lost the *Substantials* of Religion, and were wholly deprived of their Church estate. The Church was settled in Jacobs Family: Corruption & Superstition did creep into his Family, so as that he was fain to set upon a work of solemn Reformation, and that was not two hundred years after the Reformation begun in his grand-father Abrahams Family. After the Church become National, the Truth and power of Religion did very rarely continue above on or two generations at the most, ( sometimes not so long ) witness that Scripture which was worthily opened and applyed [ † ] in this place upon the like solemn occasion two years ago, [ † ] *By Mr. MOODEY.* *Judg.*

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*Judg. 2. 7. 10.* And the people served the Lord all the dayes of Joshua, and all the dayes of the Elders that out-lived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel. — *And all that generation were gathered unto their Fathers, & there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.* Those that were the Grand-children of that generation which was brought out of Egypt, did forsake the God of their Fathers: Hence is that expression *Hos. 10. 9.* O Israel thou hast sinned from the dayes of Gibeah; what horrible wickedness was in Gibeah, we may read in the 19. & 20 Chapters of the Book of Judges, where we have y<sup>e</sup> story of the *Levite's Concubine*, which tho' it be mentioned towards the close of that Book, yet it is evident that it hapned before the Judges, for it seems y<sup>e</sup> *Jebus* (afterward *Jerusalem*) was not then taken by the children of Israel *Judg. 19. 11. 12.* whenas that was taken before they were govern'd by Judges, *Chapt. 1. ver. 8.* So that the wickedness of Gibeah and their war with the Benjamites, which followed thereupon, was between the death of Joshua & the Judges. Moreover, *Phineas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron* was Priest in those dayes *Judg. 20. 28.* which makes it very manifest that, that most corrupt Generation were the grand-Children of those that were first embodied a peculiar people, when the Lord did plant the  
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Furthermore since the Church hath been by divine Institution *Congregational*, in these daies of the New-Testament, men have been no less subject to apostacy then in former Ages. The Churches in *Ghalaria* were strangely & suddenly over-run with Corrupt Doctrine: Hence the Apostle saith *Gal. 1. 6. I marvel that you are*

so soon removed unto another Gospel. He might well marvel, if the observation of [1] great Chronologers be true that within a year after Paul was removed from Galatia to Ephesus, false Teachers succeeded him, and overthrew his Foundation by endeavouring to advance a mixt Religion consisting of Judaisme and Christianity. And I remember Jerome [m] testifieth that in his time all Galatia was over-run with damnable Heresies. And as for the Church in Ephesus they quickly declined, Rev. 2. 5. Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe the first works. It was (as Historians observe about Twenty years after the Ascension of Christ that Paul gathered a Church among the Ephesians. And sixty year after the Ascension the Book of the Revelation was written: So that there had been a Church in that place above forty years; in which time the first members of the Church must needs (in probability) as to the body of them be dead, and another generation of Church members were risen up which were not like the first. The Church in Thyatira tho' not so Apostate when the Revelation was written as some other Churches, yet Ecclesiastical Story mentions how that in a few years after that, there was no Church in that place; which was one

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one Reason why some ancient [ *n* ] Hereticks denied the divine Authority of the *Apocalyps*; because therein mention is made of a Church in *Thyatira*, when as ( said they ) no Church is to be seen there, To which the Answer is that there had been a Church there, only the *Cataphrygian* Heresie did prevail so, as in a little time to swallow up the whole Church. In a word, in all those places which we read of in the Scripture, as having Churches in them, they that are the Successours at this day, are not like unto them that once were in those very places. In many places they have only the Name not the truth of Christianity, and in some not so much as the Name: Albeit, when time was, famous Churches might have been seen in those places. In former Ages Asia was the Seat of the Church, whenas in these latter Ages *Europe* is so, which ( *o* ) is judged the Reason why the Book of Revelation speaks of events to come to pass chiefly in Europe; because since the *10 kings* arose, there has the Lord Christ seen meet to uphold and propagate his Church. What shall be said more? it is evident that in the Apostles dayes the *Mystery of Iniquity* began to work, much more after they fell asleep. In the Autumn of the Apostles Age, there was a great falling of many Professors, *Ebion* and *Cerinthus* sprang up whilst the Apostles

Apostle *John* was yet living . The very next Ages to the Apostle began to depart from, and corrupt the Simplicity of the Gospel, in diverse respects that might be mentioned, † one long since observed, that altho the Church continued a virgin untill after the Apostles death, then it was soon Corrupted. It is conceived that *Jude* lived after most of the other Apostles were dead, which is judged to be the reason of his expressing himself as he does in *ver. 17.* of his Epistle : Now he complains much of a great degeneracy among those that professed Christianity.

Consider. 3. *The present Generation in New-England is lamentably degenerate.* As sometimes Moses spake to the Children of Israel, *Numb. 32. 14.* Behold ye are risen up in your Fathers stead an encrease of sinful men. So may we say, the first Generation of Christians in New-England is in a manner gone off the Stage, and there is another and more sinful generation risen up in their stead. We have in former years enjoyed a Sun-shine of prosperity, and that has bin attended ( as useth to be ) with great Apostacy . It is an apt Similitude which some use, that as the *heat* of the Sun in Summer breeds a multitude of Insects ; so does the *warmth* of Prosperity a multitude of Apostates. Men are loth

† *Hegeſyus*

loth to *hear on this ear*, but if we should deny it, the Lord does testifie against us that it is so, *Joel. 1. 2. Hear this ye old men, and give ear all ye Inhabitants of the Land, hath this been in your dayes, or even in the dayes of your Fathers sayth the Lord.* Were there (sayes the prophet) such judgments formerly as now there are? you may therefore conclude that you are departed from God, and by your sins have provoked him so to Punish you. Thus may it be spoken with reference to our State and Case, and the dispensations of God towards us, you *old men* that are here before the Lord this day, what say you to this Question, did you know such Judgments upon New-England formerly, as of late we have seen? was it so in the daies of our Parents? were there such general and killing Diseases? Such a long continuing warr? so many hundreds cut off by the Sword? yea, so many hundred *Families* brought to ruin? Candlesticks removed out of their places, and Plantations made desolate! In former times we heard of little besides Settlement of Plantations, and gathering of Churches, but of late years, instead of that, Ruines have been multiplyed, yea, mischief upon mischief. God has been spending his Arrows, & heaping mischief upon this Generation. This Generation is not like the first. How many ignorant ones! how many scandalous ones! There is great Rudeness amongst young ones in this Land; and



and in that respect Degeneracy from the GOOD MANNERS of the Christian world. And such sins as formerly were not known in *New-England* are now become common, such as Swearing, sinful Gaming, &c. yea, the present generation as to the Body of it, is an unconverted generation. I would not lessen the grace of God, I know that through Grace many of the younger Generation are brought home to God in *Jesus Christ*, yet in many (I doubt in most) Congregations the number of sincere Converts is but small, compared with those that remain still in a natural and unconverted Estate. And as for some that have the Root of the matter in them, yet they fall much short of their fathers grace. Solomon was a good man and his soul is now in Heaven, yet he was not like David his Father as to measure of grace and faithfulness, 1. *King.* 11. 6. We may see here and there one that hath much of his blessed Fathers spirit and Principles, but how rare are such among us! Nay, the interest of *New-England* is now changed from a religious to a worldly interest; and in this thing is *the great radical Apostacy of New-England*. Is not this to choose a strange god? Hence do we see Warr in the gates. And the Lord has been letting this generation *bloud in the right vein*, since he has taken the world away from them. Trade is almost ruined. Farmes, Oxen, Merchandise which things have been sought



sought after in the first place, how have they failed! *New-England* is not like this twenty years, to be in that comfortable Estate it was in but two years agoe.

Consider, 4. *There is sad Cause to fear what will at last come on this Generation.* There is a Consumption on Religion all the World over, as one well observes [p] the burials of Christians are frequent and their Birth is rare. And as for what concerns our selves more peculiarly, we may fear that their will be greater Apostacy, because they that should have prevented it are gone. Many times the removal of a few eminent servants of God in a Commonwealth, or in the Churches, maketh way for great Apostacy quickly to ensue. Was it not so with the Children of Israel? When they had a good Judge over them, they would serve the Lord all the dayes of that Judge, *But it came to pass when the Judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves more then their Fathers,* Judg. 2. 18. 19. In Nehemiah's time while he was Governour for twelve years together, things went well, and God blessed the Land wonderfully, but when he was removed in one years time, those sins of Opression, Sensuality, Sabbath-breaking, were become prevailing common Evils *Neh. 13. 6.* Alas! our *Nehemiahs* are gone, ( I speak it not reflect upon

[p] v. *Fulfilling Script. in Epist. pag. 2.*

upon those that survive, but to awaken from the solemn Consideration of those Bereavements ) our Pauls are likewise departed from amongst us in which respect we may fear Corruption in Religion will follow *Act. 20. 29. Deut. 31. 27. Judg. 8. 33.* Have we not seen it in some places, how that within a year after the death of such an eminent Servant of Christ, Apostacy to this day irrecoverably hath prevailed? Furthermore, the heads of the second Generation, that were most likely to have done good, the Lord has snatched them away, and (like *Enoch* ) translated them to Heaven in the midst of their dayes: Others that are most likely to prevent backsliding, and to be Instruments of reforming a corrupted Generation are not likely to continue long in this evil World. yea, and of late, even since the present Warr, ( that we are bleeding under ) began, the Lord has taken away many young ones either by Sword or Sickness, who were the Hopes of the generation. In many Plantations, they that have dyed of late, were the most hopeful and desirable yong men in the places where they lived! an Ominous sign that there is some terrible thing which God will doe ere this Generation be passed away.

Consider. 5. *How sad it would be if succeeding generations should forsake the Lord. It is evident*

evident from the Considerations mentioned, that it *may* be so, but it would be dismal if it *should* be so: New-England would of all Lands become the most dark and miserable. How sadly does the Prophet speak of *Bethaven*! now what was that *Bethaven*? even the same that was in former times *Bethel* i. e. the House of God, *Hof.* 4. 15. with 1. *King.* 12. 29. *Amos.* 5. 5. If such places where the House of God has been erected do once degenerate, they are like to become *Bethavens*, places of the greatest vanity and iniquity in the World. Hence is that *Hof.* 9. 15. *all their wickedness is in Gilgal.* Gilgal was once famous upon Religious accounts: There was the Covenant renewed by Circumcision, there was the first Passoyer kept by the Children of Israel, after their coming into the promised Land, There did God appear to Joshua, There was to be seen a famous Monument of the Lord's doing Wonders for his people, There was the *Tabernacle* for some time, but in after-generations an Idolatrous *Temple* was built there, so as that it was a Fountain of much Wickedness. *All their wickedness was in Gilgal.* It seems the *Altar of Witness* was near that place, which through mens Corruptions might easily be abused unto much *Superstition* in after Ages. The Devil seeketh to corrupt those places especially, which once were famous for religion.

As † *Polanus* observeth that *Wittenberg* in Germany was the Town where the Reformation in *Luthers* time began, and therefore the Devil did seek to corrupt that place especially, and caused it to become the seat of grievous Heresies. What Land under Heaven has been more noted for profession and Religion, than New-England? If Apostacy prevails amongst such a people, it is like to be a sad Apostacy indeed: We see it already. Hence there are such sad Complaints of young men that have been bred and born in New-England, when they go abroad into other Lands that none are so debauched and profane as some of them. If the Lord should be provoked to pluck up the Hedge of civil government, what a fearful flood of Iniquity would soon break in! How would maddened and enraged Profaneness know no Bounds! yea, this Land would become as Sodom, and then most desolating plagues will in short time follow *Ezek. 33. 28.* What became of Cain's degenerate race when they were become I know not how many Millions? the flood swept away every mothers child of them: Wherefore all the children of men that are now in the world are styled the children of *Seth*, *Numb. 24. 17. [q]* because as for Cain's Apostate Generation, they all perished in the flood. When the Old World did Apostatize

† *Polan. in. Hos. 9. 15. [q] Belgick Annot.*



Apostatize, after the Reformation in the dayes of *Seth*, that second Apostacy proved fatal. If Churches in New-England degenerate, it is an Apostacy after Reformation. How fatal is such a relapse like to be! will not the end thereof be with a flood? And truly to be amongst the last Apostates will be most woful.

*Quest.* But what shall be done in order to prevention of *Apostacy*? What shall be done that so succeeding Generations in *New-England* may not forsake the Lord God of their Fathers?

*Ans.* As I have been meditating an Answer to this Enquiry, I could not but call to mind that Scripture which some of the chief of the Fathers (at least-wise those two, † whom I have more reason than any one in the world to think of) have upon the like solemn occasion improved many years since, I mean that Scripture *Hag. 2. 4.* *Yet now be strong O Zerubbabel saith the Lord, and be strong O Joshua, and be strong all ye people of the Land.* If Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the people of the Land, if Magistrates, Ministers and people all do what Duty requirerh, the feared Apostacy, together with the unavoidable Calamity coming therewith, may be prevented, however in great Measure and for a long time.

First

† *My Father Cotton & my Father Mather.*



1. Let me apply my speech unto Zerubbabels, *b. e.* Rulers in the Common-Wealth: Honoured and much Esteemed, The Wellfare or Ill-fare of the present, yea, and following Generation doth much depend upon you. *Magistrates* are in the Scripture compared to *Corner stones*, because where there is a Common-Wealth erected, the Safety of the whole Building under God depends much upon them: Hence are they also termed *Foundations*, *Psal. 11. 3.* *If the Foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous doe?* If David had perished, Foundations had been destroyed, and the good people of the Land would have dearly felt the loss of him. And when in Saul's time there were corrupt *Judges* and *Magistrates*, it is therefore said that the *Foundations* of the Earth were out of Course, *Psal. 82. 5.* And the prophet *Micah* speaking to the Rulers in the Common-Wealth of Israel saith, *hear ye Foundations of the earth, Chapt. 6. 2.* It is with you (by the help of Christ) to lay such Foundations as shall make Posterity either happy or miserable. David improved the power which God in his providence entrusted him with, to serve his Generation according to the will of God, *Act. 13. 36.* And therefore was an Eminent Blessing to all that Generation wherein he lived. If the Sins of the people under your Care

Care and Charge should ever provoke the Lord to leave you in an hour of Temptation, you cannot possibly turn aside from God alone, but many others will do so too, 1. *Kin.* 11. 33. & 12. 30. 2. *Chr.* 24. 18. and 33. 8. *Regis ad Exemplum* --- People are apt to follow the Examples of those in place. You know it is mentioned concerning Rehoboam, that he within a few years after his coming to the Government did forsake the Lord and *all Israel with him*, 2. *Chron.* 12. 1.

Let me then with all due respect to your places and to your worth, and yet with that freedom & Faithfulness which becomes a Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, propound some Things to you, which concern the Welfare of *this*, and *after Generations* in New-England.

i. I pray you in the Name of the Lord, that a *speedy and Effectual Course* may be taken that the great things that God did for our Fathers in *planting these Heavens, and laying the Foundations of this Earth*, be faithfully recorded & transmitted to Posterity. This hath been thought of and spoken of long enough, but why is it not done? If it be neglected till the present Generation be passed away, the next will be less capable of doing it. The Title of the Book wherein my Text is, leads me to insist on *this*. Why is this Book called the *Chronicles*,  
but

but because it contains a Record and Relation of the things which God did for his people in ancient time, yea, from time to time. The Hebrews have termed it, [*dibre hajamim*] words of dayes probably ( as [*r*] some conceive ) taken out of the Royal *Diaryes* of those times, by divine direction and inspiration; this Book of Chronicles being an unerring [*s*] Epitome of those Chronicles mentioned in the Kings. The truth is that above half the old Testament is a Chronicle of things done by the Lord for his people, in the years of ancient generations. You have then Scripture Example abundantly to encourage, in promoting a work of this nature. Hence we read of the Book of *Jasher*, 2. Sam. 1. 18. and of the Book of *Nathan* the Prophet; and of *Gad* the Seer, 1. Chron. 29. 29. and of *Abijah* the Shilonite, and of *Shemaiah* the Prophet, 2. Chron. 12. 15. and the story of the Prophet *Iddo*, 2. Chron. 13. 22. There is also plain Scripture precept [*t*] as well as Example to move hereunto; see *Psal.* 78. 5, 6. For he established a Testimony in Jacob and appointed a Law in Israel, which he Commanded our Fathers, that they should make them known to their Children, that the generations to come might know them, even the Children which should be born, who should

[*r*] *Grotius*. [*s*] *Varablus*. [*t*] See Mr. *Adams*'s Sermon on *Psal.* 102. 18. pag. 25.

should arise and declare them to their Children. And again *Psalm*. 102. 18. This shall be written for the Generations to come. So that this is a duty incumbent upon present generations, to take care that there be a Record of the great work of God towards them, for the benefit of the Generations that shall follow, that so God might be glorified. I perceive that some good men are affraid lest our to great neglect in this matter, may be one thing that God is offended at. And there be two Considerations which may cause such Apprehensions not to seem groundless; one is, That this thing hath been formerly urged. [ u ] That faithful *Shepherd* who spake here in the Name of the Lord on the like occasion, five years agoe, insisted upon this very thing, and yet the matter remains unfinished to this day. Moreover whilst the Body of the first Generation whom God planted in this Wilderness was alive, there were Essays this way, for it † was Propounded to and Concluded amongst the Commissioners of the *United Colonies* above Thirty years agoe, that there should be a Collection of Special Providences of God towards his *New-England People*; and that Memorials being duly communicated, an History should be Compiled according to Truth, for the benefit

[ u ] See *Mr. Shepard's Election Sermon* p. 16.

† See *Records of the Commissioners* Sept. 9. 1640.



benefit of Posterity, that they might see how God had *been* with their Fathers, in laying the Foundation of the Churches, and of the Common-Wealth; now that such things should be concluded & yet never done, cannot please God. Furthermore, how can we testify to Posterity our gratitude towards God, for the great things He hath done for our Fathers, and for us their Children, in more respects than can be now mentioned, except such a lasting Record and Monument as I am speaking of, be brought to perfection. In the Town-House at Geneva, is written on Marble Pillars in Letters of Gold, Such a year GOD delivered this place from the Tyranny of Antisbrist, and set up His TRUE RELIGION amongst us, [x] therefore the Senate and People of Geneva have erected this Monument that so they might testify their Gratitude towards GOD. Let me then entreat you that are Senators of this Colony, that a work of this nature may not be alwayes delayed, and the rather because you know not whether your opportunity to Encourage such an undertaking, will be of long Continuance. And this may by the blessing of Christ be one good meanes to prevent Apostacy. The Lord therefore Commanded his people of old to keep a Record of his works & signal Providences towards them that, so their Children

[x] *Clark's Examples* vol. 1. pag. 236.



Children after them might set their hope in GOD and keep His Commandements, Psal. 78. 7.

2. *I pray you in the Name of the Lord, to take care for the propagation of the Interest of the Gospel, that the good knowledge of the Lord may be amongst the People under your Government in your time, yea, and after that also. If ignorance overspread the Land, Apostasie will do so too. Hence David here saith know thou the Lord God of thy Father and serve him, but if thou forsake him &c. intimating that except succeeding Generations know the Lord, they will not serve him but forsake him. Therefore it concerns the Magistrate to take Effectual care that the Land be furnished with able and faithful Ministers: So we read of Jehoshaphat, that he caused Levites to be sent into all the Cities of Judah, who taught the people 2. Chron. 17. 8, 9. and this stands upon Record to his everlasting Renown. It is not every man that is fit to be employed as a Publique Teacher. Ezra saith (Chapt. 8. 17, 18. ) that he sent unto such and such, that they would bring unto him *Adimisters for the House of God*, & that by the good hand of God they brought *a man of understanding*: He that is employed in *holy things* ought to be such an one. Therefore you should endeavour that the future generation be furnished with a learned*

Learned Ministry. The (y) Writers of Ecclesiastical story inform us, how careful Christians in the primitive times were, for the settling of Schools of Learning, in all places where Churches had been planted, that so there might be able instruments raised up for the propagating of Truth in succeeding Generations. And some have well & truly observed, that the Interest of Religion and good Literature, hath risen and fallen together. It was *Julians* policy to pull down Schools among Christians, that so he might destroy Religion: (z) concluding that *the Cause that should not have an able Defendant would fall.* Therefore let there be a pious and earnest Solicitude about that matter. One of the famous Kings † in our Nation caused a Law to be Established, that all Parents should bring up their Children in Learning. I know there are good Laws among us respecting inferior Schools, though I doubt as to Execution there is great defect in that as well as in other matters. Let me also beseech you to endeavour that what concerns the *Colledge* may be Revived, and if it may be in the place where it formerly flourished, I have nothing to say against that, but much

(y) *Cent. 2. c. 7. & 3. c. 7.* (z) *Read Mr. Reiner of the necessity of Humane Learning for a Gospel Minister.* † *Elfred vide Clark, vol. 1, pag. 173.*

much for it rather ; & that greater encouragement be given to those that labour as Tutors there. (a) That was propounded to this General Assembly four years agoe, by him that did then so faithfully declare the Counsel of God to this generation. I would gladly second a motion of that nature, as supposing that more of the Welfare of the uprising Generations is Concerned therein than many are aware of.

I remember it is noted concerning the learned *Chytrius*, that he prevailed with the Princes of *Megapol* to bestow 3500 Crowns of yearly Revenue upon the University of *Rostock*, by which means the interest of Religion was wonderfully promoted : And it was one of the usual wishes of that Excellent man, *Utinam Reges ac Potentes rerum Domini, maiorem Ecclesie ac Scholarum curam susceperent.* ( said he ) that Magistrates would be more careful to encourage Schools of Learning, and thereby promote the good of the Church. The Reformers did in this way, and by this means carry on the Interest of Religion, and propagate the Truth to after Ages. *Calvin* therefore perswaded the Senate of *Geneva* to erect an illustrious School in that City wherein the Tongues and Arts were taught, and from whence many worthy Instruments issued forth.

And

( a ) *Mr. Oakes his Election Sermon pag. 57.*

And that excellent Prince *Cassimire* did the like at *Neostad*, where *Ursin* and *Zanchi* were sometimes professors. So the Senate of *Grunberg* erected a Colledge and chose the learned *Bucholtzer* to govern it. The like was done at *Herborn* by Prince *John of Nassau* at the persuasion of *Olevian*, where also *Piscator* taught and flourished. So at *Leyden* in Holland. And (not to mention more places) the same Course was taken at *Edinburgh* in Scotland, of which Colledge that Famous and Holy man, *Mr. Rollock* was the first President and many Choice Instruments of God's glory have there been Educated. Wherefore let what concerns this matter, be among the chief of your Cares and Endeavours.

Further, I entreat you let it be your Care, that none but faithful ones (as far as men can judge) be employed as Publick Preachers; Though the just Liberty of Churches should not be infringed; yet that every Plantation in the Countrey should have Allowance to choose whom they please to labour in the publick Dispensation of the Word, may be in time a great Inlet to ignorance, error & profaness. Therefore let me humbly propound to you that you would think of some Expedient, respecting the Approbation of such; as shall be under a constant improvement as Publick Teachers. Yea, and that there be not any Place settled



without such. No doubt but one reason why the Lord hath let loose the Heathen against us hath been, because some Plantations have been erected and yet no publique acknowledgement of God amongst them, but they have lived like *Heathen*, without Sabbaths, without the Word and prayer, which are moral duties that all are bound to attend: and it is therefore incumbent on the Magistrates to see that they do so. People are ready to run wild into the woods again and to be as Heathenish as ever, if you do not prevent it. Take care also I beseech you for the propagation of the Gospel amongst these poor Indians: You know it is expressed in the *Patent*, as one main end proposed by our Fathers in their coming into this Wilderness, that so they might endeavour the Conversion of the Natives, and set up the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus among them. God by the late warr hath made way for the Gospel to be entertained amongst them, more than formerly; should not this be considered?

3. *I beseech you in the Name of the Lord, that you would in special manner beware of that which was the sin of Solomon: and what was that? Truly sinful Toleration was Solomon's great Iniquity, whereby he did forsake the Lord. It is said of him, he built High places for Ashteroth, 2. King, 23. 13. because he did tolerate, and give publick allowance, unto those*  
*Idola,*



Idolatries: and that sin of his was the reason why the Lord stirred up Adversaries against him. Do we not find that all the godly reforming Magistrates, spoken of in Scripture, thought it their Concern to pull down false worship, as well as to set up the true Worship of God. It is a most vain objection which some have made, That we do not read in the New Testament, that the Magistrate did ever punish any, on account of transgression against the *first Table*: No more (saith *Calvin*) do we read in the New Testament that the Magistrate did ever punish men for murder, or other Crimes, does it therefore follow that he ought not so to doe? But therein it is said that they ought to punish all evil doers, *Rom.* 13. 4. *1. Tim.* 1. 9. And that Transgressions against the *first Table* are evil deeds, *Gal.* 5. 19. 20. *Phil.* 3. 2. *2. Joh.* 10. 11.

Moreover, sinful Toleration is an evil of exceeding dangerous consequence: Men of Corrupt minds though they may plead for Toleration, and Cry up Liberty of Conscience &c. yet if once they should become numerous and get power into their hands, none would persecute more than they: So the *Danists* [b] of old, and the German Anabaptists [c] in the last Age, And the Arminian

[b] See *Clarks Martyrology* pag. 89. 90.

[c] *Sleidan, lib. 10, pag. 139.*

*Arminian Remonstrants* † in the *Netherlands* made Hideous Clamours for *Liberty of Conscience*, and that the States of *Holland* were more cruel than the bloody Spanish Inquisitors, yet when they became potent, they did persecute the Orthodox Professors of the Truth. And indeed the Toleration of all Religions and Perswasions, is the way to have no true Religion at all left. That was *Julian* the Apostate's device, in order to an extirpation of Christianity. And it is a Solemn Word which *Mr. Cotton* (the first and famous Teacher in this Congregation) speaketh [d] *I wish* (saies he) *that Antichrist do not creep in at the back door of Toleration*. I do believe that Antichrist hath not at this day a more probable way to advance his Kingdom of Darkness, than by a Toleration of all Religions and Perswasions. Hence some of the chief of the Popish Doctors (e) have written against the Magistrates power in matter of Religion. But remember I pray you how God hath punished this in which

† *Voetius Disp. Vol. 3. pag. 795. & 803.*  
*Grotius de Pietat. Ordin. Holland. (d) Mr.*  
*Cotton's Bloudy Tenet washed. pag. 192. (e)*  
*Sic Becanus; Mariana, Harding contra Juellum,*  
*Hart in Rainoldum. Sic Bozzius et Rossau,*  
*quos vide citatos apud Keckermanum in Polit.*  
*pag. 983. et Paratm in Rom. 13.*

which I am testifying against. Of old (as some [f] have truly observed) when once the Roman Emperours did indulge and tolerate *Arians*, God was provoked to let the Barbarous *Goths* loose to break in upon the Empire and destroy it, so as that the Church fled into the Wilderness, and had like to have been swept away with that flood. And what misery this sin hath more than once brought upon our Land and Nation, I need not tell you. It is a very memorable Passage which I find related in the Life of that great learned *USHER*, when Popish Idolaters were by the Civil State allowed; Well, (said that Worthy of his time) you shall find that God will punish you forty years hence, by those very men, whom you have sinfully indulged: And so it came to pass; for just forty years after that, was the Irish Rebellion. This very sin which God calls me to bear witness against this day hath been *subversive* to the interest of Religion in some Christian Nations. The Toleration of *Sacrianisme* has proved the ruin of the Churches in *Poland & Transylvania*. Yet it is far from my design in speaking this to stir up Magistrates to that which the Scripture calls *Persecution*; it were better to err by too much indulgence towards those that have the root of the matter in them, than by too much Severity. Nay, as to those that are indeed

(f) *Strong Select Sermons. pag. 263. 264.*

indeed Heretical, I can for my own part say with Luther, *ad iudicium sanguinis tardus sum*, I have no affection to sanguinary punishments in such Cases. And certainly there are other † wayes to suppress Hereticks besides *Hereticide*, witness what was done by great *Constantine* for the suppression of *Arianism*. Nevertheless, approved Writers who, are large enough in the point of *Toleration*, declare, that they, the principles of whose Religion are disturbing to the Civil State and Constitution of any place, may not be indulged, ( and that therefore Popish Priests and Jesuits are not to be permitted ) Sure then they whose Religion, and whose Profession doth warm in its bowels a fatal Engine, against the Kingdom and Churches of the Lord Jesus, ought not to be tolerated. Nor is it tolerable for any sort of men amongst us, to set up a *moim Gerizzim* that if these or those are justly cast out of the Churches of Christ, they shall be suffered to set up an Altar against the Lord's Altar, and ( it may be ) to take those hands that are in the Name of the Lord Jesus delivered up to Satan, I say, to take those hands to administer \* the dreadful mysteries of the Kingdom, it is an abomination enough to make desolate. Certainty ( much honoured in the Lord )

† See Sr. Simond D'Ewes his *Primitive Practices for preserving Truth*. p. 6, 7. \* *Phrykta mysteria*.



if your blessed Fathers and Predecessors were alive and in place, it would not be so ; If † *Winthrop, Dudley, Endicott* were upon the Bench such profaneness as this would soon be suppressed . And if it be so that the spirit of Rulers in New-England is changed, if you do become cold and indifferent in the things of God, departing from your former love, and zeal for the Name, Truth, and blessed Ordinances, of the Lord Jesus, I will be bold to speak to you, as once Mr. *Brightman* said to a greater man than any of you all, *if it be so, you may believe it, God will change either you, or your Government ere long.* I speak it to you with great solemnity of Spirit, and in the Name of *Him* that is Higher than the highest.

4. *Labour* ( *I likewise pray you in the Name of the Lord* ) to the utmost of your power, that the work of Reformation may be promoted in this Generation. I shall not need to insist here, because this Argument was abundantly and worthily enlarged on ( *g* ) by him that spake in the Name of the Lord on this occasion three years agoe. Since that, the holy dispensations of God towards this people have been very dreadful, so that the Lord calls for Reformation now more than ever. If things should pass away

† See *New-England's Memorial.* pag. 140.

( *g* ) *Mr. Torrey in his Election Sermon.*



away this, and the Generation that is to come should not see that some notable thing was done with respect to a Reformation of provoking evils, it would be sad indeed; and the more sad, in that there have been *Essays* this way: And since the late (and to this day not fully ended *Warr*) a Committee appointed by the General Court to enquire into the Causes of the high displeasure of God, which hath been manifested, and such and such evils concluded to be matters of Provocation, and Laws enacted for the suppression of them, and shall it all come to just nothing at last? Shall we dare to dally with the Almighty in things of this nature? The Lord may respite us for a while but, except there be a Reformation of provoking Evils, we have no reason to expect otherwise, but that *a worse thing will come unto us*, and that He will punish us yet seven times for our sins. And how is there like to be that Reformation which the Lord requires, except you that are Leaders over this people, doe your utmost to promote it? Where do you read of any great and general Reformation brought to pass, except the civil Magistrate did forward it? It is true, that many times God doth make use of his Messengers and Ministers to set the Wheel a going, but then Magistrates have fallen in with them. The Prophets *Haggai* and *Zachary* set the work of Reformation upon the wheel, but  
*Zerubbabel*

*Zerubbabel* son of *Shealtiel* (that godly Magistrate) carried on the work to effect, *Ezra*. 5. 1, 2. *Luther* began the Reformation in Germany, yet if some of the Princes there had not engaged with him, the work had never been carried on with such success. † *Calvin* (and other eminent Ministers of God) exhorted the people at Geneva, unto Reformation, but if the *Senatours* of that place had not hearkened to the voice of God in those Exhortations, the people would have remained unreformed still. *Zwinglius* by his Ministry was instrumental towards the accomplishing a great Reformation in *Zurick*, but then the Magistrates of that place fell in with the Word of God. *Oecolampadius* was an happy instrument in the hand of Christ to reform *Basil*; but if the Magistrates of that City had not set to their helping hand, *Oecolampadius* alone might have laboured in vain. The like is to be said concerning the Reformation of *Bern*, (not to insist on more instances) where that learned *Hallerus* was once a Preacher of the Gospel. I know you cannot change mens hearts, yet you may doe much (if God help you) towards the effecting an outward Reformation, which will procure outward blessings and prevent outward Judgements and desolations.

There

† Recd the lives of *Luther*, *Calvin*,  
*Zwinglius*, *Oecolampadius*, *Hallerus*.

There is pride in the hearts of men, you cannot Reform that, but there is pride in *Apparel*, which the Lord has said he will punish for, you may cause *that* to be reformed. There is Drunkenness in the sight of God, which doth not fall under your Cognizance, but Drunkenness in the sight of men, and the occasions of it, do; which you may and ought to remove. I know not any evil, that hath brought more misery upon this Generation than that hath, and some that have reason to know it, have told me that there hath been more Drunkenness among the Indians since this warr, than there was before: undoubtedly there is a fault somewhere, that good laws are not executed upon those that shall transgress in this kind, and that the Course propounded and enacted by the General Court for the suppressing of this growing evil has not been duly attended. Again, as for scandalous contentions, you may doe much towards the healing of them. All the world knoweth that there hath been an unhappy breach between two of the Churches in this great Town; if every one of you that are in place, shall doe what you can, and what the Lord Jesus would have you doe, to help in this case, we may hope, that woful breach will (by the help of Christ) soon be healed, and much Sin and Judgement (that is otherwise like to follow) will be prevented. And the Lord calls aloud about this matter; The Burning

Burning which he hath kindled in this place, the voice of the Lord in it is, *out with your sinful fires, lest I give you burning for burning.* And since that, this Town hath been endangered more by fire than ever it was since the day I knew it. Therefore I come to you in the Name of the Lord, and beseech you to consider of this matter, lest the Lord kindle another fire in Boston ere long that shall burn to the Foundation of the Mountains: And I do the rather mention this thing because the subject I am upon, leads me to it, the welfare of posterity being concerned therein, it may be the *sowre grapes* which the Fathers have eaten will set your Childrens teeth an edge. I remember blessed [g] Mr *Burroughs* in his *Irenicum* takes notice of it, that it is very dangerous for the Children of the Church to be brought up in the sight of Divisions amongst Professours. Was there not a young man (h) that came to a lamentable End in this Countrey who professed that the Divisions which he observed amongst godly men had occasioned his ruin? Let us remember that Scripture, *Jer. 32. 39.* I will give them one heart to fear me for the good of them, and of their Children after them. If there be a divided heart amongst Christians, and these Divisions appear openly; it is a wrong

[g] Mr. *Burroughs* *Irenicum* pag. 220.

[h] *Abraham Warner* in *Harford*:



Wrong to their Children after them. The Lord help us to Consider it.

And now I shall turn my Speech from you that are *Zerubbabels* among this people: I doubt not but you Consider that I have spoken these things not as a friend only, but as in the capacity of an unworthy Ambassadors of the most High God unto you this day. And methinks my conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, that an earnest desire that the will of God might be done, hath caused me thus to express my self: As also a desire that you might have Comfort both now and in *that day* when you must give up your account to the Son of God concerning your Stewardship, which in his Providence he hath entrusted you with; and that your Names might be honourably spoken of in the next Generation when you shall be in your Graves. It is no honour to *Jehu's* name that in *his dayes* God began to cut *Israel* short 2. King. 10. 32. Nor to *Jehoram* in that it is recorded to posterity that in *his dayes* the *Edomites* revolted, 2. Chron. 21. 18. Nor will it be for your Honour if the next Generation shall say, Once such & such Worthies and Patriots had the Management of Affairs in New-England, and in *their dayes* things went well, God did bless, and build, and prosper the Land; but after they were gone the Work fell into other hands, and in *their*



*their dayes* there was trouble upon trouble, Warrs, Sickneses, Sword Fire, Desolations in every Corner of the Land, for it *thus to be spoken* would not be for your Honour. But now that it should be said, though the Lord afflicted the Land for a while, you caused the people under your Charge to turn unto the Lord, and then God did own them and bless them more then ever, this will be to your honour amongst men in this world, and more to your Joy when you shall appear before Jesus Christ, than if Crowns of Diadems should be set upon your heads. The Lord grant it may be so.

2. Let me humbly propose this Exhortation to those that are Ministers in the House of God. There are many such before the Lord in this great Assembly;

My Fathers and Brethren, The Generation that is Present, and that which is to come will bless God for us, if we doe our utmost to promote their Welfare; We are many of us eminently *the Children of the Prophets*. The Prophets *do they live for ever, and our Fathers where are they?* They are now in Heaven beholding the Glory of Jesus Christ; And the Lord Jesus who sometimes said to the Angels of the Churches, *I know your works*, speaketh to us saying, the great affairs of my Kingdom which once were in the Hands of your Fathers to Manage, are now come into your hands,

they were faithful to my Name, and did acquit themselves as became them, now let me see what you will doe: Follow them as they followed Christ. Give me leave to mention two or three words, which if the Lord help us to Remember them, we shall serve our Generation according to the will of God.

1. *Let us approve our selves faithful in what Concerns the House of God.* And therefore we ought to be Careful who are admitted there. tho' others are also concerned therein, yet in a more peculiar manner *that matter belongs to us.* We are in (respect of sacred Office relation before the Lord) *Porters* that have the Charge of his House; and we are solemnly charged, *Ezek. 44.* (it is a Scripture that concerns Ministers of the New Testament) not to bring into the Lords Sanctuary uncircumcised in heart to be in the Sanctuary to pollute it, and to eat the Bread of God there. Indeed as for those whom God hath admitted into his House (in any degree) by any Rule of his, we must not turn them out till the Lord doe it. But that which I intend is the Admission of persons into full Communion, we know what our Fathers have Taught concerning that matter, *viz.* that there ought to be an Holding forth Faith and Repentance before Admission to the Lords Table and it is well said by  
blessed

Blessed Mr. *Mitchel* [ i ] that *Laxness* in that Point would be a real Departure from our former Profession . Yet I wish there be not Teachers found in our Israel, that have espoused loose, Large Principles here, Designing to bring all Persons to the Lords Supper, who have an historical Faith, and are not Scandalous in Life, altho' they never had Experience of a work of Regeneration on their souls, and live in the neglect of secret Duties, wherein the Life and Power of Godliness especially consists . Now this would corrupt Churches and ruin all in a little time. The [ k ] neglect of this Principle of Truth, that such Members of the Church as are admitted to full Communion , ought to be Regenerate Converted Persons , the Non- attendance unto that did ( as a worthy, Divine of our own hath well noted ) lay a Foundation to great Apostasie, which the Christian Church hath been long subject unto. Again, if we would be faithful as to what concerns the House of God, we must endeavour that the Building thereof be carried on to Perfection. As David in this Context speaks to Solomon, *Take heed now for the Lord has chosen thee to build an house for a Sanctuary, be strong and doe it .* So has the Lord been pleas'd to chuse

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[ i ] *In Answer to Apol. preface pag. ult.*

[ k ] *Dr. Owen de Theol. l. 6. c. 8. p. 504.*

us to be employed in building his house, which has not been carried on to the desired perfection. Our Fathers did like *David*, he prepared Materials for the Temple and then left it to his son to go on with the building 1. *Sam.* 22. 5. 14. So did our Fathers leave us Principles of Truth, which they did with much cost and pains, dig out of the Rich veins of the Scripture. We have need therefore to be much in prayer, and Humiliations before the Lord that so he might vouchsafe to show us the Form of the House and the Fashion thereof, and the Goings out thereof, and the Comings in thereof.

2. Let us make *Converting work* our main design. Shall we be content to goe to Heaven alone, and not strive to carry as many of the Generation we live in, along with us as possibly we can? Alas, Apostasie will prevail, and these Churches cannot be kept pure long except *Converting work* goe forward. O therefore let us Preach for this, and Pray for this, and study for this, that precious immortal souls may be converted to God through Jesus Christ. And to this end it will be good for us to attend personal instruction of those under our Charge, as far as time & strength will permit us. I remember it's noted in the *Lives* of *Chrysostom* and *Austin*, that besides their publique Labours, they did sometimes attend personal instruction of these and those of their

Hearers

**Hearers.** When the Ministers \* in *Geneva* did agree to divide the City so as to call each Family to an account concerning their Faith, more good was done thereby, than by all their Publick Teachings: And some [1] of latter time have been blessed with eminent success as to Conversion of souls, so as that whole Towns where they have lived have been wonderfully changed upon taking this course. I know that where there is but one Elder in a Church (as alas that is now the case of these Churches generally) so much cannot be done that way as is to be desired; yet if we doe as much as we can, the Lord Jesus will accept of it, and it may be, success will be beyond expectation. Many an one that minds not a Sermon, yet when he is by a Messenger of God particularly spoken to, and told, you are yet in your sins; if you be not *new born*, better you had *never* been born; he falls down under Conviction. And possibly words that we little think any such thing of now, will be mentioned again to our exceeding joy and rejoycing in the day of Christ, when we shall see and hear many souls stand forth and bless the Lord Jesus that ever they knew us, and that ever we spake to them in the Name of the Lord both publickly and

\* *Refertur in vita Calvini.* [1] *Mr. Joseph Alleins life, with Mr. Baxters Preface. Ames Cas. Consc. Lib. 4. Cap. 26,*



and privately ; even in the day when each of us that hath been faithful in his generation shall say, *Lord here am I and the Children that thou hast given me*. Moreover, if we would Convert souls and be Blessings indeed to this generation, it concerns us to be very careful of our personal conversation, and what examples we set before others. If we do not live Sermons as well as preach them we are not likely to doe any great good.

[m] See Dr. Tuckney on *Exod.* 28. 36. pag. 429. And Dr. Fuller *Holy State*, pag. 268. And Greenhil on *Ezek.* 42. pag. 334. and Mr. Dury in his *Discourse on that Question, how far a Minister of the Gospel may engage himself. in civil Affairs*.

For a Minister of Christ to be a [m] Merchant and entangle himself with the Affairs of this life, against the expresse charge of y<sup>e</sup> Holy Ghost; or for them to be Gospel Lawyers, to handle the Code instead of the Bible, and study the Statutes of the Land instead of the Statutes

of Heaven ; for them to appear as Advocates, and plead Causes in civil Courts of Judicature it is very uncomely. One of the Ancients observes that *Sacerdos in Foro, et Mercator in Templo* is not to be tolerated. Certainly such preachers are not likely to be instruments of turning many to Righteousness. Much more do they hinder the Conversion of souls, that shall call themselves Ministers of Christ, and yet

yet be of a scandalous Conversation: When the Prophets of Jerusalem are light Persons; Profaneness goeth forth into all the Land. I have read somewhere of one that was grievously tempted to Atheism on this account: For, (said that poor Creature) *I live under a Minister that will preach good Sermons, but his conversation is not according thereunto; he will be drunk sometimes, and secretly vile and lascivious, and therefore how can I believe that there is any God, or Devil, Heaven or Hell, or any such thing?* An evil Example in such an one is enough to make those of the Generation amongst whom he liveth to become Atheists.

3. *Oh! that our occasional meetings might be improved for the good of this, and after-generations.* Because of the Capacity and holy Relation we stand in before the Lord, it is expected we should not be like other men, they may meet together & spend the time in discourses of their own personal Concerns; but we have the care and Charge of souls committed to us: Yea, (in our measure) the Care of all the Churches ought to be upon us: Nay more, we must be solicitous for those that shall come after us. Such a publick Spirit well becomes our publick Capacity, and therefore upon all occasions to speak and act accordingly. And verily the Lord will write down these discourses in his Book of Remembrance, and we shall

shall be glad to hear of them again *at that day*; We must every one of us (Ministers as well as People) appear in a greater congregation than this, and then we shall not be sorry that we have laid our selves out for God and for his People; yea, the more we have done for Christ and for the Generation wherein we live, the greater will our glory be when we shall hear the Lord Jesus saying, *Well done thou faithful servant*, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.

If the Lord help us to approve our selves faithful unto the Death, when he the chief Shepherd shal appear, he will give unto us a Crown of Glory which fadeth not away.

Let me in the last place direct my speech and Exhortation in the Name of the Lord unto the People of this Land. There are here present those that are *Deputed* to act in the Name and stead of the people of this Jurisdiction. You have a great opportunity put into your hands by the providence of God to doe service for this and after generations, *viz.* by endeavouring the establishment of righteous and religious Lawes in the Commonwealth, that so the Lord Jesus might reign there. Especially let me propound to you, that you would take some effectual course that good Laws which are already established may be duly executed: And that some further care might

might be taken for the suppressing of that wickedness that is usually committed the night after the Sabbath, God hath lately kindled a fire in this place, & it was on the night after the Sabbath, why should we wonder at it? I cannot speak it without some Anguish of Spirit, there is more wickedness committed usually on that night, than in all the week besides. Therefore think of some expedient to help in this case. Let me also mention another thing to you, I have formerly upon a solemn occasion mentioned it to the Honoured Magistracy, and therefore now apply my self to you; it is this that you would recommend unto the Churches in this colony, a solemn Renewal of their Covenant with God & one another. That is a great Scripture Expedient for Reformation. Do not think that this is any new Notion, but it is a known Principle owned \* and avowed by the good old Non-Conformists ( whose children we are ) That *Renewal of Covenant is the way to attain Church Reformation*: which Principle was much Improved by the chief of the Fathers in these *New-English Churches* also; ( and therefore I the rather insist upon it ) this is the way to prevent Apostasie. The Covenant was renewed in the dayes of Joshua, when as the Scripture testifies that in his dayes the Children of Israel Continued to serve

\* *Carrwright, Parker, Ames, &c,*

serve the Lord, wherefore Divines observe, that Joshua's special Design in putting the people upon Renewing their Covenant, was that so they might be kept from future Apostasie. I do therefore in the Name of the Lord, commend this matter to you, and leave it with you, and God encline your hearts to doe that which shall be pleasing in his sight. And if the Lord intend not further shakings and desolations amongst these Churches, I am perswaded that this Motion will be harkned unto and Complied with.

Moreover, there are many others of the people of the Land here, before the Lord this day, a considerable part of the present Generation is met together in this great Assembly; A few words let me speak to you. and leave with you, that so you may not forsake the Lord, the God of your Fathers.

1. *Let us labour to be rightly informed respecting Principles which our Fathers owned.* There are Mistakes in the minds of some who think that the Fathers of this Colony, affirmed thus and so, albeit it was far from them so to teach, or so to think. I shall not (being now in earnest, and desirous to speak with utmost Solemnity) enter upon things which are more Controversal amongst us, but certain it is, that our Fathers alwaies owned and avowed this



this principle of Truth, *That nothing should be admitted into the Worship of God but what there is Scripture Warrant for, nor any thing neglected which the Lord hath Instituted.* The Cause of the Second Commandment was that which our Fathers were engaged in the Defence of. And as to Church Administrations, *That things should be reduced to the Primitive, Apostolical pattern.* An excellent principle, albeit, that blessed Martyr † Mr. Laurence Saunders was accused of Heresie for asserting it: And I remember that learned man and blessed Martyr Peter Ramus professeth in one of his Epistles that the deep consideration of this principle \* *that the Apostolical age was the golden age of the Church, and that things should be regulated according to what was then practised in the Churches of Christ,* caused him to become a Protestant, yea, and for the Congregational way of Church Government. and indeed the Congregational way truly stated, is that which our Fathers have stedfastly owned and avowed, that is to say as it is held forth in the Platform of Discipline, and by Mr Cotton in his Book of the *Keyes*; they were not for Presbyterianism, nor yet for Brownism. Remember blessed Mr. Norton's last words in this place, and under this Roof.

Secondly

† *Clark's Lives*, pag. 493. \* *vide Petri Ramus Epist. ad Cardinal. Lotharingum* pag. 256, 257.

2. *Keep up the power of Discipline in Churches.* When Apostasie prevailed in the Asiatick Churches, there was the original wound, they did not brandish the Sword of Discipline, which is Christs own Expedient, and appointment for the preservation of Churches in purity; yea, this was a fatal Neglect, which by degrees proved ruinous to those once famous and glorious Churches. Some learned \* men have well observed, that the Neglect of Discipline in the Churches of Asia brought in corruption of manners, and Corruption of Manners was (through the just revenging hand of God) attended with Corruption of Doctrine, and these together provoked the Lord to lay those Churches most desolate. And as for the Children of the Covenant, let Discipline be extended towards them, according as they are subjects capable thereof. Did not our Fathers come hither in hope that they should leave their children under the Discipline and Government of the Lord Jesus in his Church? Hath not Christ owned the application of solemn publick Admonitions, &c. to some of them that have been Children of the Church, (tho not in full Communion) even so as to convert their souls thereby? why then should disputes about the mode wholly evacuate the Thing, when so much of the well

\* *Voetius alicubi inter Disputationes.*

welfare of souls and the interest of Christs Kingdom is concerned therein :

3. *Look to your Families* . Families are the Nurseries for Church and Common-Wealth, ruine Families and ruine all. Order them well & the Publick State will fare the better. The great wound & misery of *New-England* is that Families || are out of order. As to the generality of House-holders, Family-Government is lost and gone ; Servants do not fear their Masters, children do not honour their Parents, in that respect the English are become like unto the *Indians*. Let Christians make conscience of it as their Duty, to rule their own Houses well, and be careful that Family Instruction be upheld ; the Judgment of God should awaken to this. In some Families the Children have no Father left to instruct them, in other Families Fathers have no Children left, to be instructed by them ; by these terrible Judgments they that have Families should learn to be diligent in Instructing of them, whilst they have an opportunity so to doe : And this is the way to prevent Apostasie : For Ignorance is the Mother ( not of Devotion but ) of H E R E S Y . Usually they that prove Hereticks , are such as were never thoroughly grounded in the Knowledge of

|| *Read Mr. Stockton of Family Instructions* .

of principles, never well instructed in Catechetical Fundamental Doctrines and points of Religion. The *Waldenses* \* preserved and propagated the Interest of Religion by diligence in catechising their Children. When certain Jesuits were sent among them to entice them from the Truth to Idolatry, they returned amazed, professing that Children of seven years old amongst those *Waldenses* knew more in the Scripture, and of the Misteries of the Gospel, than many of their learned Doctors did. Take heed also how you dispose of your Children, you that are parents look at Religion and the fear of God in the Disposal of your Children. That blessed man Mr. Dod (the Moses of his time) would sometimes bewail it, that Professours of Religion would say, *There is a Portion and Civility, and we will hope for Grace; but (said he) rather make sure of Grace, and hope for Riches, there is far greater reason for it, since Godliness hath the Promises, Riches have none.* It may make us dread to think what's coming, in that it is with us as it was with the old World, the Sons of God are marrying with the Daughters of men, Church Members in disposing of their Children look more at *Portion* than at *Piety*: If their Children are like to live well in the World, and their Families to be made richer, they look

no

\* Read the history of the *Waldenses*.

no further ; a sad sign that Religion will expire, and such Families be cut off from the Covenant, within a few Generations, and the branches thereof perish for ever.

4. *Pray with all manner of prayer & supplication in the Spirit :* Pray as sometimes the Martyr did, *Lord do not thou forsake me, lest I forsake thee.* Pray for your poor Children and posterity, as David did for his son Solomon. *1. Chron. 29. 19. give unto my son Solomon a perfect heart.* He did not only exhort and charge his Son to labour after such an heart, but earnestly prayed to God, that such an heart might be given to him. And truly, if there were more prayers poured forth before the Lord for the Converting of the *rising Generation*, we may hope that there would a blessed Effect follow. I have been told that there is a Church in N. England that hath set dayes apart only to seek unto the Lord, for converting grace to be vouchsafed to their Children. O that all other Churches would do as they have done, even seek unto the Lord by Fasting and prayer, for a poor, perishing, dying, unconverted Generation :

5. And Lastly. *Be faithful in improving of your Civil Liberties.* Beware of two Extreame, of an *Issacharian Spirit*, to couch under every Imposer : If you foolishly lose your Liberties,

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your



your Posterity, yea the Children that are yet to be born will rue it. Beware also of a *wanton Spirit*, lest you provoke the Lord by bitter Bondage to make you know the worth of Liberty. It is a great Priviledge which you enjoy at this day, that you may choose Rulers from among your selves. And although as to what concerns the Transactions of this day, it is almost too late to speak, yet you may hear for the time to come. *Freemen*, remember the oath of God that is upon you. I doubt there is lamentable guilt upon many, who in *Elections* are acted more by interest and Faction than by conscience. You know what the Rule is, *viz.* that you should Choose men that are just, and that fear God and hate Covetousness. Choose men that shall approve themselves (like *Eliakim*) Fathers to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Choose men of Hezekiah's Spirit, who *spake comfortably to all those that taught the good knowledge of the Lord*. In a word, choose those that will be zealous for the interest of Reformation, and that therefore will improve their power to suppress Transgressions of the first, as well as of the 2nd. Table. If you will choose such (which mercy forbid that ever it should be) under whose shadow Thorns and Briars shall thrive, and those Weeds of *Pride, Contention, Heresie* shall receive Nourishment, and Encouragement; it will be an Ominous  
sign

sign that God will ere long deprive you of your *Liberties* until such time as you know better how to improve them.

And now I hope I may say that as to the opportunity put into my hands this day, I have discharged my Conscience, delivered my soul, and can lay down my head with peace. I conclude with *Moses*, Calling Heaven and Earth to record, that *life* and *death* hath been set before this Generation. O Generation see the Word of the *Lord*, choose *Life* that both thou & thy seed may live. And *God* from Heaven saith, O that there were such an heart in this generation that they would fear me, that so it may go well with *them*, and with their *children* for Ever,  
*A M E N.*

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*Tibi Domine.*

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## ECCLES. XII. I.

*Remember now thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth.*

**S**olomon in this Context doth apply himself to speak unto *Young* men, whom he doth, 1. Dehort. 2. Exhort.

• His Dehortation is in the two last verses of the former Chapter. And it is

1. Ironically propounded *ver. 9. Rejoyce O young man in thy youth &c.* It is such another form of Speech as that of the Prophet unto *Ahab* 1. King. 22. 15. *Go and prosper.* \* He saw that Ahab was set upon his design, and therefore by way of Irony bids him go and see what would come of it. Thus Solomon here, I see young man (saith he) that thou art resolved to follow thy pleasures and vanities, whatever the event shall be, doe so, and see what will come of it. Wherefore he adds *Walk in the waies of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.* This is expressly forbidden elsewhere in the Scripture, † A clear evidence that the wise man here speaks by way of holy derisi-

\* Cartwright in Eccl. 11. 9. † Mercer in loc.

derision, and thence it is further added, *know thou that for these things, God will bring thee to Judgment.* q. d. Though its possible thou mayst escape Judgment from men, parents, Magistrates, &c. yet not from the Lord.

2. This Dehortation is plainly expressed in the verse immediatly preceding this Text, *Remove sorrow from thy heart.* The Hebrew word translated *Sorrow*, signifieth *Anger*: q. d. Beware of inordinate passions, which young men are usually subject unto: *And put away evil from thy flesh*, h. e. avoid sinful pleasures. Passions and sinful pleasures are evils which young men are most in danger of being carried away by; therefore he doth in special caution them against iniquities of that nature: withal adding this reason, *for Childhood and Youth are vanity.* h. e. its soon gone, thy time ( young man ) to enjoy sinful and foolish pleasures will soon be past & gone, it abideth not, therefore set not thy heart upon such things.

2. We have Solomons *Exhortation* unto young men in this verse: wherein is expressed 1. The Act that ought to be done, *Remember.* 2. The Object, *thy Creator.* i. e. God, for he, and he only is the CREATOR; since it requireth an infinite power to be able to produte a work of Creation. Hebr. [ *Boreeca* ] *Thy Creators*: Not that there are more Gods or more Creators than one: But there is a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. Though the work



of Creation be more especially ascribed to the Father, as Redemption to the Son, and application to the Spirit, yet each of the Persons in the Sacred and Eternal Trinity, doth concur therein. 3. The *Time* or Season, when this Duty ought to be attended is expressed. viz. *now, in the dayes of thy youth.* not that they that are past the dayes of their youth may forget God, or be exempted from this Remembrance of him, but *young men* are under special obligations and Advantages to remember Him.

**Doctr.** That as it is the duty of all, so more especially of young men to remember God their Creator. Remembring God may not be deferred until old age, but ought to be attended in the dayes of youth.

In the Doctrinal prosecution of this Truth, there are three things to be enquired into, 1. What is implied in this Remembring. 2. How it doth appear that young men ought to remember God. 3. The Reason Why they especially should do so.

**Quest.** 1. What is implied in this Remembring which the Text speaks of?

**Ans.** It is a known Rule, that in Scripture Words of Sense doe imply the affections and actions. So here, it is not every kind of Remembrance of God, but that which is affectionate and practical, that is intended. Particularly,

1. This Remembring doth Imply, a Turning to the Lord. Psal. 22. 27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord. Unfeigned Repentance is Implied in this Remembrance. Rev. 2. 5. Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent. Ezek. 6. 9. They that escape of you shall remember me among the Nations. h. e. They shall repent and return to the Lord. And it is a penitential Remembrance which Solomon here speaketh of. Remember thy Creator, that is, remember to make thy peace with him, and therefore to repent of Sin, and to turn to God in the dayes of thy youth.

2. This Remembrance which the Text speaketh of doth imply Service and Obedience. Psal. 119. 55. I have remembered thy name, and have kept thy Law. As they that neglect the Worship and service which they owe to the blessed God, are said to forget him, Psal. 9. 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God. that is to say, they that do not serve God. When the Children of Israel had forsaken the wayes and Corrupted the Worship of God, it was said, Israel hath forgotten his Maker. Hos. 8. 14. So on the other hand, The Service of God is noted by that of Remembring him. Remember thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth, h. e. Seek and Serve him betimes. As David exhorted his son Solomon whilst yet in his youth, 1. Chron. 28. 9.

Know and serve the Lord with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. Hence the performance of all Religious duties, especially that great duty of Prayer, is implied in this Remembring which the Text speaketh of *Jonah 2. 7. I remembered the Lord* (saith the Prophet) and how was that? it follows, *my prayer came unto thee into thine holy Temple.* We read in the Gospel, of children that prayed unto the Lord, they said *Hosanna*, i. e. *save now we beseech thee* *Mat. 21. 15.* That is implied in Remembring God the Creator.

3. It doth also Imply Frequent thoughts and Meditations of God. *Psal. 63. 6. When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.* Where there is that Remembrance of God which the Text requireth, there are frequent holy Meditations on him day and night. As Solomon exhorts *Prov. 23. 17. Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* Set God before thine eyes; where-ever thou comest think of him, from morning unto night, ever and anon, let there be awful holy thoughts in thy heart concerning the Omnipresence of God. And this is to remember him. We come therefore to the second thing to be enquired into, viz.

Quest. 2. How doth it appear that young men ought to remember God?

Ans. 1. The Lord doth require this, the Commandment saith expressly *Luk. 10. 27. Thou*

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. If men are bound to serve God with their strength, then they must not forget him until those dayes are come wherein their strength is gone, and they able to do him little service. Of old, God required that the first born, and the first Fruits should be given to him, Exod. 22. 29. Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruit, the first born shalt thou give unto me. This did intimate that men ought to give the prime of their Age, the first and best of their strength unto the Lord.*

2. The Truth of this Doctrine is evident in that Parents are bound to teach their Children the fear of the Lord whilst they are young *Dent. 6. 6, 7. The words which I command thee, thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, Again, it is said, Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, Prov. 22. 6. To the same purpose is that of the Apostle. Eph. 6. 4. Ye fathers bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And according unto this hath been the practice of Saints. The Lord himself doth testify concerning Abraham that he would command his children to keep the wayes of the Lord Gen. 18. 19. And Solomon doth acknowledge that his father David was careful to instruct him, and put him in mind of God, whilst he was yet in the dayes of his youth, Pro. 4. 3, 4.*

*I was my fathers son, he taught me, and said unto me, let thine heart retain my words. Yea, not only his father but his mother also taught him the fear of the Lord. Cap. ult. 1, 2.. The words of King Lemuel, the Prophecy that his mother taught him, what my Son? and what the Son of my womb? and what the Son of my vows? Now to what end were it to teach Children and young ones to fear the Lord, if they were not bound to learn and doe accordingly,*

3. Young men as well as others owe service unto God; He is their Creator as the Text expresseth. Now that one Consideration has great weight in it to enforce duty and obedience. For certainly all owe service unto him, from whom they have received their Beings, *Psal. 95. 6. O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. HE hath made all for himself, from him and for him are all things. He, as Creator hath given unto men reasonable souls in respect whereof they are capable of knowing and serving the Lord: and he is able to destroy them: He that made them can destroy them; as it is said concerning that creature, He that made him, can cause his sword to approach unto him. Job 40. 19. Therefore it concerns men to fear their Creator.*

But to proceed to the third Particular, namely, *Quest. 3. Why ought young men especially to remember their Creator?*

*Ans.*



*Answ.* For these (amongst other) Reasons,  
 REAS. I. Because Youth is the fittest season to remember God in: Wherefore it is added in the Context, *before the evil dayes come, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.* Old Age is an evil Time: And therefore (saith the *Wise man*) thou must remember and serve God in thy *good dayes*, if thou wouldest have him to remember and accept of thee in thy evil dayes: if thou neglectest God in the *Spring* of thy years, what reason is there to think that he will regard thee when *Winter*. Age is come upon thee? Moreover it is not easie to turn unto the Lord in old age: A young Plant is more easily pluck'd up than an old Tree; So are young men with less Difficulty transplanted and plucked up out of the Soyl of Nature. than they that are grown old in the wayes of Sin, Old diseases are hardly cured: so when men by a long Continuance in a Course of Sin have contracted almost incurable Habits of Sin, how hard a work will it be to convert them! were it not that *all things with God are possible*, it could not be. Wherefore the Scripture saith, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots?* then may you also doe good that are accustomed to doe evil. Jer. 13. 23. When Satan hath held possession a long time, it is not an easie work to out him and dispossess him, wee read of one in the Gospel that had a most terrible Dispossession.

Dispossession, *Mark 9. 25. 26.* Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying, *I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him, and the Spirit cried, and rent him fore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead, in so much that many said, he is dead.* How difficult and how painful was this Dispossession! Why? *ver. 21.* it is noted that the Father of that young man, being enquired of, how long he had been in that Condition he said, *of a Child.* Truly they that spend their Childhood in the service of Satan, If ever they be Converted are wont to have dreadful Conversions at last. Therefore young men should turn to God betimes, that so they may escape those bitter pangs, which otherwise they must expect to undergoe if ever Good come of them.

*Reas. 2.* From the Good and Benefit which doth follow upon Remembring and Turning to God betimes: As it is said *Lam. 3. 27.* *It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his Youth.* So it is good for a man to turn to God, and to put his neck under his yoke in his youth. It was the Saying of one, that if it were lawful for him to envy the happiness of any, he would envy the happiness of those that turn to God betimes: because they are free'd from a world of Sin and Sorrow, which otherwise they would become subject unto. And this is the way to become eminent for God. There is a wretch-

wretched Proverb in the World viz. *That a young Saint will prove an old Devil.* I remember *Erasmus* saith, the Devil was the Author of that Proverb: For nothing can be more contrary to the Scripture. The most eminent Saints that we read of there, were such as did remember God in the dayes of their youth. As now, *Joseph* proved an eminent good man; there is reason to think that all *Jacobs* children were good men before they dyed, but none of them to be compared with *Joseph*: and tho' he were the youngest but one, yet it seems evident that he was converted before any of his brethren who were older than he. *Job* was an eminent Saint, not a man upon the face of the whole earth so good as he; and *Job* was one that made conscience of his wayes even from his Youth, Cap. 31. 18. *David* was a man that attained a great measure of grace before he died, & he was godly even from his Childhood: Therefore doth he spake as in *Psa.* 71. 5. *Thou art my hope O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth.* and again, ver. 17. *O God thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.* So that *David* had faith in Christ, and was savingly taught of God even from his youth. *Obadiah* was

¶ *In pietate juven.*

*Angelicus Juvenis, senibus Satanisat in annis.*

*Vide Heidfeldii sphing. Philosoph. pag. 392.*

was an eminent servant of God, and he could say, *I fear the Lord from my youth* 1. King. 18. 12. Josiah was eminent for God, and of him we read, that *while he was young he began to seek after the Lord God of David his Father.* He was truly converted when he was but sixteen years old, 2. Chron. 34. 3. Timothy was an eminent Minister and, ( as Ecclesiastical story reports ) at last he died a Martyr of Jesus Christ ; now he was savingly acquainted with the holy Scriptures [ *apo brepheous* ] from a little child 2. Tim. 3. 15. Thus we see how God has owned and blessed those that have remembered their Creator in the dayes of their youth. And for that reason young men should remember God.

*Reas. 3.* Young men are subject to the stroke of death as well as others Job 21. 23. *One dieth in his full strength.* The young man of Naim whom Christ restored to life, notwithstanding his youth, was subject to Death, Luk. 7. 14. And Jairus's daughter was but about 12 years of age, when she lay a dying Chapt. 8. 42. Was not Eutichus a young man ? and yet he fell down from an upper Chamber and was taken up dead, Act. 20. 9. Were not Job's Children young men ? and yet they died suddenly. Was not Absalom a young man, and his brother Adonijah a young man when death surpris'd them ? Did not Eli's sons die in the flower of their Age ? 1. Sam. 2. 23. Now

if young men remember their Creator so as to repent of sin, and make sure of an interest in Christ before death cometh, then happy shall they be. As Jeroboams good son tho' he were a child he died, 1. King. 14. 17. but inasmuch as in him there was found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, death did him no hurt, only he was taken away from the Evil to come, that his eyes might not behold the miserable ruin that was coming upon his Father's Family. But if death find a young man in his Sins, in an unconverted Christless estate woe to him that ever he was born! his naked soul must appear before God his Creator, and receive a Sentence of eternal Damnation.

USE. I proceed therefore to improve this Truth by way of Exhortation, *O let young men this day be exhorted in the Name and fear of God to follow the Counsel of the wise man, even to remember their Creator in the dayes of their youth.* All you young men that are here before the Lord ( and there are many such in this assembly ) hear me this day, that so God may hear you another day, now turn to the Lord, now repent of sin, now make sure of an interest in Jesus Christ: And therefore lay to heart some motives and perswasives.

Mot. 1. Consider what special Reason they that are of the younger rising generation in New-England have to remember their Creator. Now there



is cause for it more than ever, in that there are so few that doe so. Multitudes of young men are risen up in this Land, who have been forgetting God all their dayes; unto whom the Lord may say as Jer. 22. 21. *This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyest not my voice.* And as it was said concerning them of old *the Children of Israel, and the Children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth* Jer. 32. 30. It is true, there are some young ones that are remembring and turning to the Lord, which ought to be acknowledged to the praise of his glorious grace, yet it must be said with Lamentation, that the generality of the youth in this Land, walk in waies of Loosness, Profaness, Pride, Drinking, Gaming, or in a careless neglect of God, and of their own souls. Hence the Lord doth not seem to take pleasure in many of the youth of this Countrey O it is a sad word that is spoken Isai. 9. 17. *The Lord shall have no Joy in their young men.* How many young men even in *New-England* that have been cut off either by Sword or Sicknes within these two years! Now, shall the Lord have cause to complain as he doth by the Prophet (*Amos 4. 10.*) *Your young men have I slain with the Sword yet have you not returned unto me.* Moreover, young men in this Countrey enjoy means of Grace plentifully dispensed, God is calling from Heaven to them, and striving with them in the

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dayes of their youth and therefore if they forget him they will be left most inexcusable before his judgment seat. Yea and many are the Children of Godly Parents, and in that respect under peculiar engagements to seek \* and serve the Lord, who is not only their Creator, but the God of their Fathers, their God not only by right of Creation, but in respect of his holy Covenant.

2. Consider how pleasing it will be to the Lord if you doe indeed remember him in the dayes of your Youth. Jer. 2. 2. I remember the kindness of thy youth. You heard but now how the Lord is pleased with first-fruits. When Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, --- the Lord had respect to Abel and his offering. Gen. 4. 4. We read also how the Lord chose the Almond tree, Numb. 17. 8. now thats the first tree that Blossoms. The fruit of it is ripe in the spring, † Yea ( Writers affirm, in the first moneth of the

\* See the first Sermon 1. Chron 28. 9. † The Hebrew word for an Almond tree is Sheked, which cometh from a verb signifying to make haste, Jer. 1. 11. because that tree above all others maketh haste to bear fruit. Floret omnium prima Amigdala mense Januario, Martio vero pomum maturat. Bochartus. Plin. Nat. Hist. Lib. 16. Cap. 25. Drus. Cent. 1. c. 57. R. Kimchi in verbo Shakad.

the year: So when young men shall bring forth the fruit of repentance, Faith and Holiness, that pleaseth the Lord. He hath a special delight in Young men who truly fear and serve him, *Hos. 11. 1. When Israel was a child then I loved him.* One of the Ancients observeth that Christ loved his youngest disciple best. *John* was the beloved disciple, & he is reported to be younger at his first Calling then any of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus. And we find in Scripture how the Lord blessed little children when they came to him, or were brought to him *Mark. 10. 13, 14, 15, 16. They brought young children to him --- and when Jesus saw it --- he said; suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, --- and he took them up in his armes and blessed them.* You young Ones hearken; would you have the Son of God to bless you? O come to him *now*, in the dayes of your youth and he will surely bless you, for his Armes are open to receive you. And such are the special subjects of a gracious promise *Pro. 8. 17. They that seek me early shall find me.* If you will be perswaded to seek the Lord whilest it is yet early dayes with you, Christ hath promised that you shall find him, and everlasting life and happiness by him.

3. Consider the danger of neglecting God in the dayes of youth. It may be it will cost thee thy life, yea the life of thy soul for ever. Who knoweth but that the time of youth is the only

time which the Lord will allow you to repent & make your peace with God in, through Jesus Christ? If these golden dayes be lost, probably thou wilt be undone forever. I must needs tell you that for the most part it is so, that men are either converted in their youth, or not at all. We read of but one that was called at the eleventh hour. If a tree do not blossome in the Spring it is commonly dead all the year after; So they that are not converted in the Spring of their age are rarely converted at all. Now & then *one* is converted in old age but such examples are exceeding rare especially it is true with respect unto those that have in the dayes of their youth lived under the meanes of grace, heard many Sermons; experienced frequent strivings of the Spirit of God with their hearts: if they remain unconverted until the daies of their youth are past & gone, the Lord usually giveth them up to judicial hardness of heart that they shall never be converted, never saved. Young men think sadly of it in the fear of God.

4. *Consider what Examples have been set before you of early conversions.* Have you not read or heard of those that have turned to God in the daies of their Youth? nay that in their childhood the fear of God hath been planted in their hearts, that they have no sooner began to have the use of reason, but one might dis-



discern signs and effects of grace in their souls. There is a \* book which many of you have in your houses that giveth an account of thirteen Children, the eldest of them not above fourteen years old, some of them not seven years old some not so much, that nevertheless it was evident that the fear of God & unfeigned love to Jesus Christ was wrought in their hearts. And there is a printed Relation of || a child that died not long since in this countrey, who for several years before his death had his heart changed & was made a new Creature. O how may this shame many young ones that are here before the Lord this day, who are older then that child was, it may be 15 year old, nay perhaps 20 year old ; and for all that in a natural Christless estate to this day. Lamentable is thy condition that hast lived so long under meanes of grace, and yet continuest an unconverted creature. God be merciful to thee and help thee to think of it.

5. Consider, you have a great Work to do before you goe out of this world, & but a little time to do it in. As young as you are, you have much sin to repent of, and to obtain the pardon of ; Original sin thou art guilty of, and that must be mortified , And who can declare how ma-

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\* *Mr. Janeway's Token for Children,*  
*John Clap.*



many actual sins thou hast committed in words thoughts and deeds, that have been evil! and all those to repent of and endeavour that they may be mortified; and but little time to be attending works of this nature: for what is your life? It is but a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. *Jam. 4. 14.* If a man have a long journey to go in a winters day he had need to set out betimes. Thou hast a long journey to goe, is it not a long journey from earth to heaven, and but a winters day to dispatch this journey? When once the short day of life is expired, then it will be too late. There is no work in the grave whether thou art going. O then up betimes be going, be doing, and the Lord be with thee.

#### By way of Direction.

1. Beware of those sins especially which they that are in their Childhood and Youth are most subject unto, and apt to be carried away from God by. *2. Tim. 2. 22.* Flee youthful lusts, h. e. those sins which Youth is mostly expos'd unto. It is infinite mercy to be kept pure from the corruptions of Youth. If ever you should find grace to repent of the sins of Youth, & so obtain the pardon of them, yet they will be bitterness & shame to you all your dayes. Those vanities of Youth which now thou art so foolish as to delight in, it may be they will be a trouble to thee forty years hence, shouldst thou

thou live so long. Doth not Job complain, saying, *Thou makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth, Chapt. 13. 26.* And did not holy David pray as in *Psal. 25. 7. Remember not the sins of my youth.* And doth not converted *Ephraim* make an humble confession concerning the sins of his youth, *Jer. 31. 19. I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.* So it is that the remembrance of the sins and vanities of youth, are matter of reproach and shame a long time after: yea the very thought of them doth fill the soul that is truly converted, with an holy confusion of face. Beware then of the the sins of youth. To instance in some particulars: Pride is a sin that young ones are very much under the power of: hence we see that young people are strangely addicted to vanity in Apparel: Proud Fashions they must and will follow, there's no perswading them to the contrary: but beware of that sin. So for stubbornness and Disobedience to Superiors, it is an evil that Youth is very subject unto. You that are servants, young men and Maids that are here before the Lord, have you not been guilty of stubborn, disobedient carriages towards your Masters? though God in his Word tells you that you ought to be obedient to them with fear and trembling, *Eph. 6. 5.* And you that are children have not you disobeyed your Parents? Thou hast been dis-

disobedient to thy Father sometimes, but especially to thy mother. Thy heart mayake to think what is like to come on thee if thou repent not speedily: Did you ever know any dye upon the Gallows, but they confessed they had been guilty of this sin, and thereby provoked the Lord to leave them unto those things which have brought them to untimely, unhappy ends? And this is but according to what the Scripture speaketh, *Prov. 30. 17. The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the Ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it.* Intimating that such children are like to come unto miserable and shameful deaths at last. Again, Lying is a sin which Childhood and Youth is for the most part deeply guilty of, *Psal. 58. 2. They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.* How natural is it for Children to commit a fault, and then to excuse it by telling a lye! Art thou a lying child? then the Devil is thy Father, and except thou repent of this sin and beware of it for the time to come, when once thy soul is out of thy body, it must be cast into that lake which burneth with fire & brimstone which is the second death, *Joh. 8. 44. Rev. 21. 8.* So for breaches of the seventh Commandment, they are *youthful Lusts*. Wherefore *Solomon* saith that he looked out of the Window of his house, & discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding

Understanding, and he was going to an Whore house like an Ox to the slaughter, or a fool to the correction of the Stocks, not knowing that it is for his life, nor considering that her house is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death, *Prov, 7. 7. &c.* Young men whose natures are not changed by the regenerating grace of the Spirit of God, do usually live in some unclean lust or other. Either Fornication, or self-pollution or in secret wanton pranks of darkness. You young men whose consciences accuse you of guilt before the Lord in respect of these evils, I charge you in the name of God, that you humble your selves deeply in his sight for *past* Transgressions, and sin no more as ever you desire to escape eternal Damnation, Though these cursed lusts may be as dear to you as life and limbs, yet better to *pluck out the right eye, to cut off the right hand, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell fire, where the worm dyeth not and where the fire never shall be quenched.*

Again, *Sabbath-breaking* is a sin which Young ones are often found guilty of before the Lord. There was a † young man (whom many of you have heard of) that came to an untimely end, and the sin of Sabbath-breaking made way to his ruin: when he should have been hear-  
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† *Thomas Savage, who was executed at Ratcliffe-Cross Octob. 28. 1668.*



hearing the word on the Lords day, he would rather go to wicked Houses, that at last God was so provoked with him, as to leave him to commit a capital sin, upon the Sabbath day, for which he was brought to deserved execution. And when in prison he said to some that came to visit him, *O wretch that I was, I studied how I might spend the Lords day in the Devils work: that time which I should have served God in, I did most for Satan in it.* O (said he) tell young men from me, that the breaking of the Sabbath is a dangerous and costly sin.

And therefore young men beware of that sin. Remember the Sabbath to keepe it holy, or you will never remember your Creator as you ought to do.

Once more, Sinful Company-keeping is an evil that young men are apt to be drawn away from God their Creator by. Many an hopeful young man, that hath been well, instructed, that hath had great Convictions upon his Spirit, and friends that wished him well have been comforted in him; yet hath afterwards fallen in with bad company, & that has prov'd the eternal ruin of his soul. I have known young men that upon sick-beds and death-beds, have made lamentable cries *O my sinful Company-keeping hath undone me for ever!* Therefore let young men remember what the Scripture speaketh to them, *My son, if sinners entice thee consent thou not. Walk not thou in the way*



of them, refrain thy foot from their path, Prov. 1. 10, 15. Again, He that walketh with the wise shall be wise, but a Companion of fools shall be destroyed Chapt. 13. 20. Young man, wouldst thou not be destroyed? then be not a companion of Fools. Remember also what David saith, and follow his Example, Psal. 26. 4, 5. --- 9. I have not sate with vain persons. I have hated by congregation of evil doers & will not sit with the wicked. Gather not my soul with sinners. When thou diest, thou wouldest not have thy soul to be gathered to the place where sinners must be forever; then sit not with them, hold not Familiarity with them now: for they that are thy Companions and thy Familiars here, are like to be so to Eternity.

2. *Hearken to good Instruction.* In the holy Scriptures God himself instructs you, and therefore let young ones be diligent in reading the Scripture, that is the way to become like unto Timothy, to whom it was said, From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through the faith that is in Christ Jesus. 2. Tim. 3. 15. And when David had propounded that Question, wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? The Answer given is, by taking heed thereto according to thy word, Psal. 119. 9. For the most part it is so that the wayes of young men need cleansing. Youth is commonly the unclean part of a mans Age, but those

those young men that will make conscience to order their wayes & walkings according to the Word of God, shall thereby be cleansed. And the Word preached and publickly dispensed, is a meanes appointed by the Lord for the instruction of young ones that they may learn the fear of God, *Deut. 31. 12, 13. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and that their Children which have not known any thing may learn to know the Lord.* And therefore mind seriously what the Ministers of God speak in his name. Mind it young men, lest you mourn at last and say *How have I hated instruction, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor enclined mine ear to them that instructed me!* Yea; and hearken to the good instructions which you receive from those whom God hath set over you. Have you not Masters, Fathers, Mothers, that admonish you, & give you good counsel from day to day? despise them not. Doth not the Scripture say to you, *Hear ye children the Instruction of a Father.* *Prov. 4. 1.* And again, *My son hear the Instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy mother.* *Chapt. 1. 18.* Eternal woe is like to be the portion of those Children, that regard not what Father and Mother say to them. Remember Eli's sons, they were proud and head-strong; their Father reprov'd them and exhorted them to amend

amend their wayes, it is said, *notwithstanding they hearkned not to the voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them*, 1. Sam. 2. 23. Art thou the young man that wilt not obey the voice of thy Father when he giveth thee good counsell? this is a sign that the Lord will *slay thee*: a sad sign that thou art appointed for some terrible destruction at the last.

3. *Remember those things, which if duly thought on, may cause you to remember your Creator in the dayes of your Youth.* e. g. Think sadly of the Preciousness of Time, that so you may pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. You Young men, are exceeding apt to mispend precious hours, nay dayes in sin and vanity, but it is because you do not consider how precious time is. Are not some that were once your companions in sin, dead, & (as there is cause to fear) dropp'd down into hell? they would give worlds (were it in their power) to enjoy that precious time that is lost, and can never be regained. Shortly your time to remember your Creator in will be past and gone for ever. Remember also the worth of your own souls; *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* If he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, what is he profited? Young men and children do you think of this? as young as you are you have immortal souls that must either be saved or damned, that when once you are dead, your souls must go to be either

either in Heaven or Hell to all eternity. And  
**R E M E M B E R D E A T H** which may  
 be upon you ere you be aware of it. Thou  
 knowst not but that this night thy soul may  
 be taken from thee. It hath been truly said,  
*\* An old man hath death before his face, but a  
 young man hath death behind his back,* that may  
 overtake him before he thinks of any such  
 thing. Children may dye as well as others;  
*Rev. 2. 23. I will kill her children with death.*  
 I remember, I have somewhere read of a se-  
 rious godly Child, that would not speak vain  
 words, like other children, but was careful to  
 improve his time well, and being asked the  
 reason of his Seriousness, O (saith he) I re-  
 member that I must dye: When some replied  
 to him, You are Young, and may live many  
 a fair day, what should you think of death for?  
*Nay (saith he) I was in the Burying-place, and  
 there I saw a grave that was shorter than I am.*  
 So Children, look into the *Burying-place*, and  
 there you will see Graves that are shorter than  
 you are: there you will see that those that  
 have been as young as you are, and younger  
 too, have dyed and bin put into their graves,  
 and therefore it may be so with you. O then  
 • Remember your Creator in the dayes of your  
 Youth. And remember the day of Judgment.  
 As Solomon in this Context saith, *Know, O*

*young*

\* *Aquinas*



*young man, that God will bring thee to Judgment.* Young men are apt to put the Thoughts of Death and Judgment far away, and therefore they remember not their Creator. Think with thy self, I must stand before Jesus Christ, the Son of God at the great day, and what shall I then say to him? and what will the Lord in that Day say unto me? will he say, *Come thou blessed,* or will he not say to me, *Goe thou cursed.*

4. *Look unto Jesus Christ.* O betake yourselves to Him. He calls from Heaven unto you young men and Children, that are before the Lord this day, go to *Him* by Prayer, and to God by Him. Some of you, when you are asked that Question, *Do you pray?* Answer, *I cannot pray:* You would do it, you say, but you know not how to pray. Why, get into a secret place, and there lift up thine eyes and heart to the Lord Jesus, and if thou canst say nothing else, yet say, *O thou Son of God have Mercy on me!* O convert me and save my poor Soul! who knoweth but the Lord from on high may look upon thee, since the Lord Jesus himself hath said, *They that seek me early shall find me.*

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*Tibi Domine:*

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PRAY FOR  
THE RISING GENERATION.

OR A  
SERMON

Wherein Godly Parents are encouraged to PRAY  
and Believe for their Children.

Preached the third day of the 5th Moneth 1678.  
Which day was set apart by the Second Church  
in Boston in New-England, humbly to seek  
unto God by Fasting and Prayer, for a Spirit  
of Converting Grace to be poured upon the  
Children and Rising-Generation in N. England.

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*The Third Impression.*

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By, INCREASE MATHER.  
Teacher of that Church.

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Deut. 30. 6. The Lord thy God will circumcise  
thy heart, and the heart of thy Seed.

2. Sam. 7. 27. Therefore hath thy servant found  
in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

Isa. 32. 15. Until the Spirit be poured upon us &c.

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Fieri non potest ut Filius istarum lacri-  
marum pereat. Aug. Confes. l. 3. c. 25.

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To the Reader.

**E**minent Blessings do not use to be poured down upon the world, except the Church of God be first stirred up to pray for them. The Lord who is stiled Shomeang Tephillah, the Hearer of Prayer, delights to give mercy in this way. And it was never known since the world began, that the Spirit of prayer was awakened in the Hearts of those that can cry Abba Father, but some grace and blessed effect did in due time follow: He said not to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. O that God would bow the heart of New-England, even of all his Saints in these Churches, as one man, to cry mightily to Heaven, that his Spirit may be poured on the now risen ( a multitude of sinful men that are risen up in their fathers stead ) and upon the after rising Generation. The Lords People have need of something to comfort them, in this day, when there are so many doleful Symptoms of approaching wrath and ruin. Now if God say unto his Praying ones amongst us, Seek ye my face for the rising Generation, and their hearts answer again, Lord thy face we will seek for them, that will be no small encouragement to Faith, that the blessed design of our Fathers ( now with Christ, beholding His glory ) who transported themselves into this vast, and then waste Wildernesse, in special with respect to Posterity, that so they might leave a Seed that shall serve him, and be accounted to the Lord for a Generation, will not be wholly frustrate.

## To the Reader.

When did any people ask the holy Spirit of the Father, for themselves and theirs, and yet received no answer? Shall we be the first that God ever denied?

As for the ensuing, Sermon if the Publication of it shall in the least tend to set the wheel of Prayer a going, on the behalf of the rising Generation, I trust it will not be a grief to my self, or others, that I have granted a Coppy of what was delivered, unto such as have Importun'd me thereunto.

\* Now Published together with this Third Impression. Some years agoe, I mention'd another \* Discourse, relating to the rising generation in N. Engl. then in my thoughts.

I was not yett & nay in those purposes; but have through the good hand of God upon me, finished (according to the measure of grace received) what I designed. Nor am I altogether without hope, but that God, who hath chosen the weak things of the world to do his work by, that so the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, will own that poor endeavour for the good of Souls, when his Providence shall bring it forth. In the mean time, this being of the same nature with the former, let the candid Christian Reader accept of it, and help me also by his prayers that I may serve the Generation wherein I live, and whereof I am, according to the Will of God.

Boston, August 22.

1678.

INCREASE MATHER.



## PRAY FOR THE RISING GENERATION.

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Isai. 44. 3.

*I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and  
my Blessing upon thine Off-spring.*

**T**He Prophet having in the Conclusion of the preceding Chapter, in the Name of God, denounced heavy Judgment to come upon the apostate Church of *Israel*, he doth proceed in this Chapter to speak by way of Consolation to the godly Remnant amongst them; and for that end doth put them in mind of a most gracious and glorious promise; under which we have,

1. The Persons concerned or, the Subject of this promise, viz. The *Israel* of God, ver. 1. *Yet hear now O Jacob my Servant, & Israel whom I have chosen*, who are described from their political birth, ver. 2. *Thus saith the LORD that made thee and formed thee from the womb.* The \* Children of *Israel* considered as a Church state, were born in the day when the

\* *Gatak*, in locum *English Annotat. Joshe 3. 1.*

the Lord brought them out of Egypt they were then formed to be a people for himself; The Lord moulded them up into a proportionable frame of Church and State: for which cause did the Children of *Israel* begin their Religious account, ( albeit their civil account began six moneths before that ) from the time of the year when they came out of *Egypt*, since that then they seemed to begin their life. And then they were a *Jeshurun*; *Thou Jeshurun*, h. e. a righteous People as to their Constitution and Profession, according to the signification of the Name *Jeshurun*; they were wholly a right seed, under most righteous Lawes.

2. We have the *Blessing promised* in the 3d. verse: And it is first expressed, then explained. It is expressed in the former part of the verse *I will pour water upon the thirsty*, ( so the verse should be read ) *and floods upon the dry ground*: alluding partly unto plentiful showers, whereby the thirsty earth is made fruitful; and partly unto Rivers, such as *Nilus* in *Egypt*, the floods and seasonable overflowings whereof do enrich the Earth. The Promise is explained in the latter part of the verse, ( the words that are before us to insist on ) *I will pour out my spirit and my blessing*. h. e. that wonderful blessing of the Spirit: They are spiritual waters which are here spoken of; no other showers than those that come down from the

the third & highest Heaven. And this promise is further illustrated from the blessed *Extent* of it, in that not only Parents but Children are concerned therein: On thy Seed, *i. e.* thy Children, and on thine *Off-spring* *i. e.* *Posterity* as some render the word *Hebr.* [ *I will pour my blessing upon thy young spriggs* ] The Children of Gods Servants, that spring from them, and must succeed when they are dead and gone out of the world, are intended by this expression.

Concerning the fulfilment of this promise, this ( as well as many other Scriptures, which are propheticall and promissory ) doth admit of a Typical and partial, as also an Antitypical and more plenary accomplishment. The Lords people whilst in *Babylon* were like unto dry and desolate ground, but the Lord revived them afterwards, and brought them into a flourishing estate, and there was a glorious work of the Spirit of God in that matter, *Nor by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts.* And there will be a more glorious accomplishment of this Prophecy and Promise, when God shall pour out a Spirit of Converting grace upon the body of the *Israelish Nation.*

Moreover, the words being a special branch of the Covenant of Grace, which God hath established with his Servants, and with their Children, Gentiles are concerned therein as

well as Jews; for upon them is come the blessing of Abraham by Jesus Christ.

And indeed the words have special reference unto New-Testament times, which is also intimated by that expression of *pouring the Spirit*. † God is said to *give* his Spirit, under the Old Testament, but it is very observable, that he is not said to *pour* his Spirit upon men, except in the New Testament, or in Scriptures that do referr to the dayes of the Gospel.

The Doctrine which we may take up from the words, is

Doct. That *One of the greatest blessings promised in the Covenant of grace, is, That the Lord will pour his Spirit upon the Children and posterity of his Servants.*

Now for the clearing of this Doctrine, Four things may be enquired into: 1. What is here meant by the Spirit? 2. What is implied in this *pouring* the Spirit? 3. How it doth appear that the Pouring of the Spirit upon Children is a great blessing: 4. The Reason why the Lord hath made such a Promise.

Quest. 1. *What is here meant by the Spirit?*

Ans<sup>w</sup>. The Spirit is not here taken in a personal sense? altho it be a glorious Truth, that the Holy Ghost himself doth dwell in the Hearts of Believers, \* yet he is not as to his person.

† See Dr. Owen of the Spirit. p. 87. \* v. Mr. Cotton's Ans. to Bayly. p. 36, 37, 38. Dr. Owen of Perseverance c. 8 & Burges's on 1 cor. 3. p. 207. 208



Person said to be poured on men for so he is equally in all the Saints : whereas this expression of *pouring* the Spirit intimates a larger communication of him to some, than to others. Wherefore the Phrase is *Metonymical*, that being affirmed of the Cause, which is proper to the Effect. In respect of his effects and Operations the Holy Ghost is poured forth upon his Servants .

1. Then by the Spirit here is meant, the *Gifts* of the Spirit, All spirituall gifts, especially Illumination in the Misteries of the Gospel are from the Holy Ghost : Hence they that have such gifts are said to be *made partakers of the holy Ghost*, Heb. 6. 4. He that hath a gift of Knowledge or a gift of Prayer hath received it from the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of the Lord is *so far* poured upon him . And the gifts of the Spirit, are compared unto Water in the Scripture, *Joh. 7. 38, 39. He that believeth on me, out of his Belly ( i. e. his heart ) shall flow rivers of living water : this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* For as waters do refresh the bodies of men ; so the gifts of the Holy Ghost do refresh their souls. When the Lord did shewr down his Spirit in that plentiful measure on the Apostles, Thousands of souls were refreshed and revived thereby. This then is partly meant here, when it is said, *I will pour my spirit on your seed, h. e. your Children,*  
shall



shall have gifts of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon them they shall be taught to know the Lord, from the greatest to the least.

2. By the Spirit here, *Converting, Sanctifying Grace* is meant: The Spirit is put for the graces thereof. Conversion is the special work of the Holy Ghost. The Conversion of the House of David *b. e.* the Elect of God is intimated by that of *pouring a Spirit of grace upon them*, Zech. 12. 10. Grace is wrought in the soul by no other hand than that of the Spirit. When God sends down his Spirit to accompany his Word and Ordinances, then converting work goeth on, but if he withhold the efficacious influences of his Holy Spirit converting work will be at a stand, all meanes and outward Dispensations notwithstanding. Wherefore Conversion or Regeneration is called, *the Renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. These words then, are a Promise & gracious Intimation unto the Lords people, that a spirit of converting grace shall be poured upon their Children.

We come to the second enquiry, *viz.*

*What is implied in this pouring of the Spirit, which the Text speaks of?*

*Ans.* 1. This expression doth imply, that *The Graces of the Spirit are fitly resembled unto Water*: So much is intimated by the Metaphor of *pouring*, which alludeth unto the Clouds,

Clouds pouring down rain upon the Earth. Water is of a purifying nature, so the waters of the Spirit, Sanctifying grace doth cleanse and purify the souls of men Ezek. 36. 25. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your Idols will I cleanse you.* The guilt of Sin is washed away in the blood of Christ; the filth of Sin is purged by those blessed waters which do Proceed from the spirit of Christ, even converting, sanctifying grace: For the same reason Grace is compared unto fire Mat. 3. 11. Metals, Gold & silver are purified unto fire, other things by water: therefore are the blessed operations of the Holy Ghost compared both to the one and to the other. Water is of a Mollifying nature; the Earth that is dry and hard is thereby softened, Psal. 67. 10. *Thou visitest the earth and wateredst it thou greatly enrichest it with the River of God which is full of water thou makest it soft with showers.* So does converting grace soften the dry and hard hearts of the Children of men. That heart which was as hard as stone before, if once a spirit of converting grace be poured thereon, it doth become soft and plyable like water. Again, Water maketh fruitful, showers and floods do so: thus when the Lord doth rain the waters of the spirit or, cawle them to flow over the souls of men, they are made

This shot repeats the previous one, but with different lighting.

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made fruitfull in the works of Righteousness *Isai. 32. 15. Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the Wilderiness become a fruitful field.* That soul that was a desolate parched barren Wilderiness, when once the Spirit from on high is poured upon it, doth become like a fruitful field, *Ezek. 34. 26, 27.* Fruits of Holiness and Righteousnes are the effect of being watered by the Spirit of GOD; only the converted man, that hath grace in his soul is indeed fruitful, others are barren and desolate ground. Once more, Water is of an healing nature; So are the waters of the Spirit, sin is the souls sickness, grace is the souls health, the wound received by Original corruption is in some measure healed by converting Grace, *Ezek. 47. 9. For they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the River cometh.* Those words are a Prophecy concerning the Conversion of the Gentiles, by meanes of that healing virtue which does attend the blessed waters of the Gospel.

2. This Expression of *pouring* the Spirit does intimate, *An abundant measure of the Spirit, i. e. of the gifts and graces thereof.*

*Pouring* is something more than *Sprinkling*, as when there cometh a plentiful rain from heaven, enough to satisfie dry ground, it comes *pouring* down. As Elihu speaks *Job 36. 27, 28.*

*He*



He maketh small drops of water, they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof, which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly. So this pouring of the Spirit noteth a great shewr of grace, hence it is said in the context that, floods shall be poured on the dry ground: Now a flood of grace intimates a great measure thereof. There are many Scripture Expressions that confirm this, Prov. 1. 23. *I will pour out my Spirit upon you.* The Hebrew word [ *Nabang* ] which is there translated *pour*, signifieth to *spring up*, intimating that the spirit of grace in the souls of believers is like a fountain, where is an abundance of water, Isa. 32. 15. *until the spirit be poured out upon us from on high.* The Hebrew word *Gnadah* signifieth to *make bare*; so that the meaning is, that there shall be a Manifest, conspicuous pouring forth of the spirit that all the world shall take notice of it. and indeed when a soul is converted, there is an abundant effusion of the spirit to accomplish such a strange thing as that is, to change such a cursed Nature, to renew such a vile heart, must needs proceed from a plentiful effusion of the Spirit. Tit. 3. 5. 6. *By the washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* Wherefore when it is said, *I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine Off-spring*

Offspring; The Lord doth graciously promise his Servants, that their Children shall attain unto an eminency of Spiritual gifts, and unto large measures of Grace and Holiness. We come now to the Third Enquiry, viz.

Quest. 3. *How doth it appear that the pouring of the Spirit upon Children is a great Blessing?*

Ans. 1. In that the Gift of the Holy Ghost is mentioned in the Scripture as a great and wonderful thing. It is said *Act. 10. 45. They were astonished because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Yea, it is mentioned as such a gift as is equivalent to all good things, *Mat. 7. 11. Your Father which is in Heaven shall give good things to them that ask him.* Now in *Luke* it is expressed, by saying, *Your Heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* Chapt. 11. 13. So then the gift of the Spirit is virutally all good things. Truly if God pour his Spirit upon our Children he doth more for them, than if he bestowed all the good things in the world upon them. This is the great promise of the Gospel: As the great promise of the Old Testament was concerning the *Coming of the Messias*, so the great promise of the New-Testament doth respect a more plentiful Effusion of the Spirit of Grace. Hence the pouring down of the Spirit, is noted by that Expressi-

expression of the promise of the Father *Act. 1.*  
And he is called the *Spirit of promise*, *Ephes. 1.*  
*13.* as being the great gift which God hath  
promised to bestow upon his Servants.

*The Truth is evident in that the Blessing here  
spoken of, is an everlasting Blessing. Eternal  
good things are the Cheif: So is this bless-  
ing of the Spirit, upon whom he is poured,  
upon them & in them, he remaineth for ever-  
more. The Hebrew word [Fatzak] which is  
here translated Pour, signifieth to Fasten, as  
well as to Pour: I will fasten my Spirit upon your  
children. That In-dwelling of the person of the  
Holy Ghost in believers, which the New-Test-  
ament speaketh so much of, is everlasting: He  
abideth with them and in them forever, Job.  
14. 16. And the graces of the Spirit which he  
doth pour upon his People are everlasting:  
common gifts may cease, but special grace a-  
bideth to Eternity. It is a seed of God that  
is incorruptible which liveth and abideth for-  
ever, 1. Pet. 1. 23. As the Holy Fire (which  
signified the Holy Ghost his coming down from  
Heaven into the Hearts of his People) it  
never went out; No more shall Grace dye,  
or be totally extinguished in a Believing soul:  
Hence true Grace is compared unto living (i. e.  
spring) water, which never runs dry: yea to great  
Rivers in respect of their perennity. Great Ri-  
vers*

*Rivers* are alwayes running from the begining of the World to the end thereof; So is true Saving Grace of an Everlasting Nature, *Isa.* 41. 18.

3. *A Spirit of Converting grace is such a Blessing as never goeth alone:* That setteth forth the Greatness and eminency of it. If (saith the Apostle) God give us his Son, shall he not with him give us all things? *Rom.* 8. 32. So if the Lord give his holy Spirit to us, and to our children; shall he not with him give us all things? Godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come *1. Tim.* 4. 8. We should not trouble our selves about laying up great portions, or much of the things of this world for our children, if we can but prevail with God to pour his Spirit on them, to give Grace to them, they are sure never to want as long as they live in this world. Is not pardon of Sin a rich and glorious blessing, which our poor Children because they are *our* Off-spring stand in need of? Now if the Lord pour a Spirit of converting Grace upon them, their sins shall be forgiven, *Mark.* 4. 12. Is not eternal Life and Glory a great blessing? The pouring of the Spirit on the soul is a certain sign and evidence of one that is designed unto eternal Life in Heaven. Therefore the Scripture speaketh of the first fruit of

*of the Spirit* Eph. 1. 14. If the Lord give grace to our Children he will give glory too, yea he will with-hold from them no good thing *Psal. 84. 11.*

Quest. *But why hath the Lord promised to do thus for his Servants?*

Reas. 1. *From the Exceeding Riches of the Grace of God.* That the Lord most high who hath an absolute Dominion over the works of his hands should at all deal with man in a Covenant way, or make any promise to him, is from grace; much more that he should deal thus with fallen man: And that he should extend his Covenant not only to parents but to their Children also; that their Of-spring with them are under the wings of the Covenant. And moreover, that he should promise so great a Blessing as that of giving his Spirit, and yet more, that his Spirit should be poured upon them: We may well cry out as they did *Zech. 4. 7. Grace! grace!* None but a God of infinite Grace would have done thus.

Reas. 2. *Because the Children of Gods people do many of them belong to Election,* As it is expressed in the context *Jesurun whom I have chosen;* That Election of God is mentioned as the ground of this promise in the Text. The Elect of God are the proper Subjects of this promise. The Lord in the Covenant of grace hath not only promised that whoever doth truly



truly believe & repent, shall be saved; but as to the Elect there is a promise of the first grace, even that *converting* grace should be poured on them, they shall be made to repent and believe. A new heart shall be given to the house of Israel h. e. the Elect typified by the house of Israel, *Gal. 6. 16.* Now God hath seen meet to cast the line of Election so, as that it doth (though not wholly and only, yet) for the most part run through the loyns of godly parents. There are, it is true, Elect Children, who are not born of elect parents, but there are few (if any) Elect Parents without elect children: Sometimes all the Children belong to Election as we see in the many sons of Jacob, (however some of them) that the Lord remembers and establisheth his Covenant with. The Scripture doth frequently hint this Truth, that *elect children are for the most part cast upon elect Parents.* See *Psal. 103. 17. Isai. 59. 20. and 65. 22, 23. 2. Tim. 1. 5. 2. Joh. 1.* And Observation doth confirm it. For wee see that the Elect of God are not in all Nations alike, but in some the Lord gathers his Elect to himself from generation to Generation. And there are some Families that the Lord hath Chosen above others and therefore poureth his Spirit upon the Offspring in such Families successively. \* But of this

*In my Sermons on 1. Chron. 28. 9.*

this I have spoken more largely else-where and therefore shall not insist further upon it now.

*Reas. 3. That so godly parents might be encouraged to pray and believe for their Children.*  
It is marvelous pleasing unto God when his Servants pray and believe not only for themselves but for their Children also. Now a promise is an encouragement unto prayer: David found in his heart to pray that God would bless his Family forever, because the Lord had promised that it should be so 2. Sam. 7. 3, ult. Men should not think with themselves, (as some do) if their Children do belong to God, then he will convert them whether they pray for it or no, but should therefore be stirred up to the more fervency in cries to Heaven, for the blessing promised. *I (saith the Lord) will give a new heart to you and to your Children; yet you must pray for it. I will yet for this be enquired of the house of Israel to doe it for them,* Ezek. 36, 26, 37. And a promise is an encouragement to Faith, as well as unto prayer: As Paul said, *I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me,* Act. 27. 25. So a Believer may say, God hath told me that he will bless me and my Family, that he will pour his Spirit upon my poor Children, and therefore I believe God, that it shall be as he hath told me.

USE. Let it be for *Exhortation* and *Encouragement* unto that which is the special ground of our being before the Lord this day, viz.

*To pray that a Spirit of Converting Grace may be poured down from heaven upon our Children, and the Rising Generation in New-England.*

I would direct this Exhortation;

1. To Parents, 2. To Children.

1. To Parents, Consider,

1. *How needful a thing it is to be much in prayer on this account.* Converting grace is of absolute necessity in order to Salvation, and that as to the Children of Godly parents as well as others, for they are born in Sin as David confesseth, *Psal. 51. 5. I was shapen in Iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me:* yet his mother was a precious godly woman; and for ought that doth appear to the contrary, his father was a good man too: wherefore such Children dying in a natural unconverted estate, are lyable to Wrath and Death and Curse and Hell *Eph. 2. 3. We also, even we that are Jews, and not Gentiles only, we that are the Elect of God: yea, we that are chosen to be Apostles and ministers of Christ, whereby nature the Children of wrath even as others.* So that except the Lord send forth his Spirit and renew the souls, change the Natures of our poor Children, they are never like to see Heaven. Verily, verily I say unto you except

*a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God,* Joh, 3. 3. You that are Parents, are you willing that the Children of your own Bowells should be miserable throughout the dayes of Eternity? that they should ly burning in a fiery Ocean as long as God shall be God? yet so it must be except the Lord in Mercy look upon them so as to pour down of his spirit from on high upon them.

Moreover, Prayer is needful upon this account, in that Conversions are become rare in this age of the world. They that have their thoughts exercised in discerning things of this nature, have sad apprehensions with reference unto this matter: That the work of Conversion hath been at a great stand in the world: In the last age, in the dayes of our Fathers, in other parts of the world, scarce \* a Sermon preached but some evidently converted; yea, sometimes hundreds in a Sermon: which of us can say we have seen the like? Clear sound Conversions are not frequent in some Congregations. The body of the rising Generation is a poor perishing, unconverted, and (except the Lord pour down his spirit) an undone Generation. Many that are Profane, Drunkards, Swearers, lascivious, Scoffers at  $\gamma$  power of godliness, despisers of those that are good, proud, disobedient creatures

\* *Vide Fulfilling of Scriptures. pag. 116.*



Creatures, God from heaven pittie them ! Others that are only civil, and outwardly conformed to good order, by reason of their education, but never knew what the New birth meanes ; pray for them that they may not only come *near*, but enter *into* the Kingdome of God .

Consider. 2. *That Prayer is a notable means to obtain this mercy.* Prayer opens the windows of Heaven, *Elias* prayed that it might rain, and Heaven gave showrs : Prayer brings down the showrs of Blessing in a proper literal sense : but especially these spiritual showrs which the Text speaketh of, wherein the Lord promiseth to shewr down his spirit upon our poor Children. Assuredly if there be Prayers & tears before the Lord on this account, they will come pouring down again in showrs of grace at last. I have read of an eminent Minister of Christ, that having prayed fervently with some Christian Friends, they in the next room felt strange illapses of the Spirit upon their hearts, so as that one said, *O what a man is this that can knock down the spirit of God into all our hearts !* Who knows but that wee may pray down the spirit of God into the souls of our Children, *Luk. 11. 9. Knock and it shall be opened to you, ask, and it shall be given you.* What shall then be given ? even the holy Spirit to them that ask him, *ver. 13.*



O then Let us knock hard at Heaven gates this day ; certainly such requests are welcome to Heaven, yea, to God in Heaven, He hath shewed how acceptable such requests are to Him by gracious answers : Christ said unto his Disciples, *Behold I send the promise of my Father, ( meaning the spirit of Promise, ) upon you, but tarry ye in the City Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high* Luk. 24. 49. And what were they to doe at Jerusalem in the mean time ? no question but ( as some have noted ) they were much in fasting and Prayer that this Promise of the Father might come upon them. And not long after there was a most gracious and glorious effusion of the Spirit. And of latter times, God has been entreated to send down his spirit abundantly for the Conversion of souls, Not fifty years agoe, at a place in Scotland, \* a great number of praying christians met together, when a Sermon was to be preached the next day, and they spent the night afore in Prayer that the Lord would own the word then to be spoken for the Conversion of souls, and Behold the Lord went forth with his Word, so that near upon Five Hundred Souls were wrought upon and Converted by that one Sermon. I have been told of a Church

in

\* *Idem eodem Libro. pag. 417.*

in *New-England* \* that set apart a day for this end, that they might by Fasting and Prayer beg converting grace for their Children; & that since the gospel has bin made successful in that Congregation so as that a day of publick Thanksgiving hath been attended, in that so many of the younger, rising generation have been brought home to Christ. Now if the Lord awaken a spirit of Prayer concerning this thing in these Churches generally, there will doubtless be some blessed effect of it, with respect to the Rising generation: And whereas God hath put it into our hearts to set apart this day, thus to seek unto him, I am Perswaded it shall not be in vain but that there are a number of souls belonging to this Congregation, that must have the Spirit of the Lord Poured down on them; sheep that are not yet brought home into the Lords Fold, that must *hear the voice of the Son of God and live*. Since the Time that we agreed thus to set apart this day, God hath sent down plentiful shows whereby the dry & thirsty ground is wonderfully refreshed: And is not that a token for good that those blessed shows which we are *fasting & praying* for this day, shall in due time come down upon the *souls* of our poore children?

Consider. 3. *What encouragement we have to be at this work.* The success which such Prayers

\* At Milford

Prayers have had ( of which something hath been mentioned ) and much more might be spoken ) should encourage us. As for some of us, our Fathers & Mothers now in glory, did pray for us when they were in the world, and God heard them : Did they whom we are sprung from pray for us ? and hath God heard them ? will he not hear us, if we goe and pray for our Off-spring, and have we not already seen some answers ? If we look into our Families do we not discern that as to some of our Children, the fear of God is put into their hearts ? And why should we not look upon that as a first fruits, that all the rest of our Children shall be converted in due Time ? Moreover, the consideration of the Covenant, and Promises of God respecting Children, are a great encouragement to pray for them. This is his everlasting Covenant, *I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.* Gen. 17. 7. This promise is expressed indefinitely, and Therefore doth encourage godly Parents to plead with the Lord for mercy and Grace for *ALL* their Children : As an Holy man once said, ( and it was a great word of faith in him ) † *If I had twenty Children I would not bate God one of them.* He hath promised to be a God to my Children indefinitely, and therefore I'll pray for them *all*, and believe for them *all*,

And

† *Vide Dr. Winter of Infant Baptism. p. 105, 107.*

And why should it not be so, since the Lord himself hath said, *ALL thy children shall be taught of God*, *Isai. 54. 13.* And the Scripture doth abound with particular promises respecting the Conversion and Salvation of the Children of godly Parents. When thou doest that which is good & right in the sight of God, it shall go well with thy Children after thee forever *Deut. 12. 28.* There is special mercy belonging to those that are the seed of the Blessed of the Lord, and to their Offspring with them *Isai. 65. 23.* Yea, Promises of converting grace to be poured upon them, *Zeche. 10. 9.* *They shall live with their Children, and turn again.* The Children of the Lords People shall be turned from the power of Satan unto God: that's implied in those words, and not only that the Jews and their Children should be returned from their Captivity in Babylon, whereby this turning again from sin unto God, h. e. that Conversion which we are speaking of, was mysteriously signified as in a Type. And in the Book of *Psalms* we find gracious Promises to the Children of such as fear God, *Psal. 102. 2 8.* *The Children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee;* And again *Psal. 128. 3.* *Thy Children shall be like Olive plants round about thy table.* \* The Expression may import that they shall

\* *Vide Mr. Stockton of Family Instruction p. 118.*



shall be Comforts and Ornaments to their Parents ; Yea that they shall be adorned with gifts and graces of the Spirit of God . And in special, there is a promise of this Blessing with respect to Children in the Times of the Gospel, Joel 2. 28. *It shall come to pass afterwards, h. e. in the last dayes or times of the Gospel, as the Apostle doth expound the words I will pour my spirit upon your Children.* Now these dayes wherein we live, come under the last dayes, we therefore should plead that Promise before the Lord, and say, These are the last dayes, Lord, and thou hast said that in the last dayes thou wilt *pour thy spirit upon the Children of thy servants.* And indeed that fulfilling of the Promise which our eyes have seen is ground of Encouragement to Pray, and plead, and believe for more . Some of *New-Englands* Chidren have been eminently blessed by the Lord, He hath poured his spirit upon them richly, *Plants of Renown* have sprung up here, that have been the glory of the Land where they have had there Education : Yea, some that whole Nations have fared the better for them: Rivers of water have flowed out of their souls, whereby Thousands have been refreshed ; and there is a blessed Sprinkling in most Churches, though not that General pouring down of the spirit that is to be desired, yet a Sprinkling which we should take notice of, for the encouragement of Faith and Prayer.



I shall only mention that which I have most reason to know; In this poor Congregation, within this few late years, there have been of Children born in New-England, near upon fourscore Persons that have come before the Church and declared what God hath done for their souls, and in that way subscribed their names to the God of Israel; besides many that have come out of other Lands, and when they have been here, the Lord hath Poured his Spirit upon them. I speak it that God might have the glory of his grace, and that Ministers may be encouraged to preach, and the Lords People to pray for the Conversion of souls. Moreover, the consideration of what Parents the Children of this Land are (many of them) sprung from, doth afford matter of encouragement. *Paul* was induced the rather to hope well concerning *Timorby*, because he was descended of such a stock; he had a Gracious Mother and a gracious grand-Mother also, *2. Tim. 1. 5.* So, many Children with us, are the Off-spring of such Parents, (*Fathers and Grand-Fathers*) as have been eminent for God in their time, eminent for Holiness, yea and for sufferings, on account of Bearing witness to the Name and truth of Christ, Now a special Blessing is wont to follow the Children of such as have been sufferers for Christ. Our Fathers were (some of them) eminent Confessors, and in a degree *Martyrs of Jesus*, who  
lest

left a pleasant Land and Fathers houses to follow the Lord into a Wilderness, in a Land which was not sown. Yea and they came hither partly with respect unto their Off-spring that they might leave their Children under the special Blessing of God in Christ Jesus. Hath not the Lord peculiar Blessings in store for such Children? Let us *pray them down* from Heaven above.

Consider, 4. *What a blessed thing it will be if we prevail in Heaven for this Mercy.* We cannot pray for a more desirable thing than this Blessing. \* It will help all that is amiss among us. If the Lord pour his Spirit upon the Body of the present rising generation, so as to begin a work of Conversion in those that are as yet strangers to the Power of Godliness, and to carry on that work by renewed Conversions in the Hearts of his people, that will save us from those Judgements which otherwise there is no hope that we shall escape them. *Ezek. 39. 29. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: Why? for I have poured out my Spirit --- saith the Lord God.* And do we not desire the Eternal as well as the Temporal Prosperity of our Children? If the Lord pour his Spirit upon them, it shall go well with them, and that for ever, *Deut. 3. 29.*

You

\* read Mr. Hookers Sermon on Hos. 10. 12.

You are thoughtful what will become of your Children after you are gone out of the world. If you can but pray grace into their souls, they shall doe well enough. As that godly learned *Claviger* would sometimes expresse \* If (saith he) I may see the fear of God in my Children, *Satis mihi, satis filiis et filiabus prospexi*, I have then Portion enough for my sons and for my daughters, they are then sure never to want any good thing as long as they shall live. If the Lord pour out his Spirit upon our Children then shall we have Joy in them indeed. No greater Joy than that 3. *Joh.* 3, 4. *Prov.* 23. 24, 25. *The Father of the righteous shall greatly rejoyce, and he that begets a wise (i. e. godly) child shall have Joy of him; Thy Father and thy Mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoyce.* We shall bless God to eternity, that ever we had such Children: for it will add to the Glory of parents at the great Day, when they shall behold not themselves alone, but their off-spring with them Partakers of eternal life and happiness, and withal see and know that their prayers have had an Influence towards the obtaining of all that mercy: We shall meet those prayers again with exceeding Joy in that day. And in the mean time our Children, if we can pray down the Spirit of the Lord upon them, will

continue

\* *Lege Clavigeri Vitam*

continue to pray for us whilest we are with them in the world. O what a blessed thing is that, for a man to have the Children that came out of his own bowels, praying for him continually. A worthy Minister of Christ once said *I had rather have my house filled with my Childrens prayers, then to have my house filled with gold.*

A few things by way of Direction.

1. *Let Parents be sure that they be converted themselves.* Dent. 30. 6. *I will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy Seed.* If our own hearts be circumcised, we may pray in faith that the Lord will circumcise the hearts of our Children, otherwise we cannot do it. Parents that have not Grace themselves, are not fit to pray for Grace to be poured on their Children, nor indeed can they do it; for the Spirit of Supplication is the Spirit of grace, Zech. 12. 10. nor can they believe for them. An Hypocrite, or unconverted man cannot act faith for his Child's soul, who never yet did believe for his own soul. Nor doth this promise in the Text belong to other than godly Parents, Psal. 128. 4. *Behold that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.*

2. *Parents be Exemplary.* Walk before God in your houses with a perfect heart. Let us be careful in our Families to walk so that our Children may see by our Examples how they ought



ought to walk and please God : that if they will but *be* and *doe* like to their Parents they shall certainly be blessed for ever. There are many of the Elect of God, that the special means of their Conversion hath been the holy example of their Parents. Many a Chosen vessel, that when he hath beheld his Fathers love to Christ, and Faithfulness to the Interest of God ; Zeal, Patience, Holiness, that hath been a special means of Conviction and Conversion. You know what *Elijah* said to *Elisha* \*when he desired that he might have ( *b. e.* comparitively to what the rest of the sons of the Prophets had ) a double portion of *Elijah's* Spirit, he said, *Thou hast asked an hard thing, nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee it shall be so unto thee, but if not, it shall not be so* 2. King. 2. 10. Even so if your children see you holy & faithful to the interest of God, and Jesus Christ, and every way exemplary, doubt not of it, but in Gods time, they shall receive of your Spirit. As on the other hand, there is nothing more fatally destructive and ruining to the souls of Children than a bad example in Parents especially if they be such as pretend to Religion : When *Cham* did but one time see his Father in drink, it brought a fearful Curse upon him, and upon his Posterity to this day. There are great

Complaints

\* See my Brothers Sermon on 1. King. 3. 57. p. 22.



Complaints (and to great Cause) concerning the *rising generation* in *New-England*; whereas the fault is very much in Parents, in that they are no more exemplary: your children take notice of your Pride, Sensuality, worldliness, your unmortified Passions, & that doth wofully scandalize, and harden them against the blessed ways of Christ. O be careful to walk so, as that your children may not see their fathers nakedness.

3. *Let Parents be careful to instruct their children in the fear of God:* Prayer should be followed with suitable endeavours. If Parents must pray that their Children may have Grace, they must use the means whereby God is wont to convey grace into the souls of his elect *Psal. 34. 11. Come ye children hearken to me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* David did so, and Solomon his son found that those Paternal instructions were blessed for saving good to his soul, *Prov. 4. 1. - 4.* also the instructions of his Mother were (through the blessing of God) a means of much good unto him *Prov. 31. 1, 2.* Fathers and Mothers should be instilling good Principles into the minds and hearts of their Children betimes *Eph. 6. 4. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* [ektrephete] feed their souls with spiritual milk as soon as they are capable of it: Tell them sadly, whilst yet they are children, of their misery by nature, of the necessity of a new birth, instruct them about Christ, and Heaven, and

Hell & Eternity; charge them with the greatest solemnity to know and serve the God of their Fathers 1. *Thes.* 2. 11. *We charged every one of you, as a father his children.* It becomes a father to charge his children: and if Parents be faithful in discharging their duty this way, success will not be altogether wanting. If you will command your children, *they shall keep the way of the Lord* Gen. 18. 19. If Parents would spend more time, and take more pains in instructing their children, & follow those instructions with fervent prayer to God, he would own them therein, and we should see more young Converts, & a world of sin and sorrow would such children be prevented and saved from.

4. *Wait on the Lord:* Tho' the answer do not come presently yet continue praying and believing and let nothing discourage you: say not I have pray'd for my Childrens souls, but no grace no change wrought in them, and now I am e'ne hopeless and faithless: Remember the woman of *Canaan*, she cried to the Lord Jesus for her poor child and yet had repulses one after another, the Lord not seeming to regard her, this was to try her faith; at last She had her desire granted, who knoweth but the Lord may deal so with thee? You therefore that fear God, despair not concerning your children, tho' at present they may be stout hearted, and far from righteousness. *Austin* || was a long time a vain, lascivious profane young man, but his god,  
 || *Lege Aust. Confes. lib. 3. c. 12.* ly

godly Mother's prayers & tears did at last prevail in heaven, that he became an eminent Convert. O continue to pray hard, and believe strongly, and that son who at present is the grief of thy mind and maketh thy soul to be in bitterness, God can make an *Austin* of him. And that Daughter which (as *Jephthah* said) hath brought thee very low &c. the Lord can convert her soul, that thy heart and thy reins, even thine shall rejoice. I remember I have somewhere read of one that had been a very sinful creature, and desperately froward and rebellious, but her godly Parents continued praying, and entreated divers faithful Ministers of God to pray for her, and God heard them, and in answer to prayer rescued a forlorn soul out of the Jaws of Satan and Hell, and when that young woman lay upon her death-bed, she said to her godly friends and Relations \* *For my sake never despair of any one let their case at present be never so bad and desperate, for you know how it was with me, & yet see how God has answer'd your prayers for me!* Think of it you Fathers & Mothers that have wept and Pray'd for the conversion & Salvation of your children full many a time, & as yet you see it not; tho' you should never see it, dye trusting in God, and believing that He will remember his Covenant with your children after you Gen. 50. 24. It was an excellent spirit of Faith that breathed in that dying Word.

\* See *Clarks Examples* Vol. 2. pag. 360. thy

Worthy † of his time, who upon his Death-bed could say to his children & grand-children *I know that you shall be blessed, not only with the blessings of earth but with the blessings of Heaven.* Know for your encouragement that your Prayers will live after you are dead; Prayers dipt in the blood of Christ, are of eternal efficacy: when your bodies are in the grave, and your souls in Heaven, your Children may remember how you instructed them & prayed for them, & *remembrance* of it may then be a means of their conversion: you may hear of your childrens conversion after you are in Heaven; the Angels of God that see it, & that *rejoyce over a sinner that repenteth*, will bring you the tydings of it, and then there will be joy all Heaven over.

2. Let me *Exhort* Children that are here before the Lord this day; *O do you goe home, and pray earnestly for converting grace.* Beg as for your lives that the God of your Fathers would pour his Spirit upon you: *Young ones, hearken!* In the Name of the Lord I speak to you; The Lord can pour his Spirit on you betimes, then shall you be rich in grace, let this promise encourage you to look up to God in *Jesus Christ.* Go into secret corners, and plead it with God, say, Lord thou hast Promised to *pour thy Spirit upon the offspring of thy servants*, I am (through thy Grace) among the children of thy Servants, thou art the God of my Father, the God of my Grand-Father, oh, be my God also. If you seek

Philip Morrey. God



God in earnest he will be found of you, but if you forsake him and break his covenant sealed in your Baptism, woe unto you! If you dye and be not first new creatures, better you had never been born, you will be left without Excuse before the Lord. Terrible witnesses will arise against you at the last day: Your godly Parents will testify against you before the Son of God at that day: and the Ministers of Christ will also be call'd in as witnesses against you for your *Condemnation* if you dye in your sins.

As for many of you, I have treated with you privately and personally, I have told you, and I do tell you, and make solemn protestation before the Lord, that If you dye in a Christless, Graceless estate, I will most certainly profess unto Jesus Christ at the DAY of Judgement, Lord, these are the children whom I spake often to in thy Name, publicly & privately, and I told them, that If they did not make unto themselves a new heart, and make sure of an Interest in Christ, they should become damned Creatures for evermore; and yet they would not repent and believe the Gospel. O why should I, who (can appeal to God that I) long for your Conversion, be your accuser before the Lord Jesus at the Last Day?

And you that are grown up to years of more discretion & understanding: Young men, and young women, O be in earnest for Converting grace before it be too late. It's high time for



you to look about you, deceive not your selves with *false* conversions, ( as many young men do to their eternal ruin ) or with *gifts* instead of grace, beware of out-standing the day of Grace, lest the Spirit of God depart, and your souls become desolate. Death waits for you, there is now a mortal and contagious disease in many houses : The Sword of the Lord is drawn, and young men fall down apace slain under it: don't you see the Arrows of death come flying over your heads? Why then, Awake, awake, and turn to God in Jesus Christ whilst it is called to day, and know for certain that if you dye in your sins, you will be the most miserable of any poor creatures in the Bottom of Hell: O consider of it; to be prayed, wept, preach'd, Fasted down to HELL! what an Amazing Thing will it be! Wherefore NOW *hear*, and *turn*, and *live*. As yet Christ stands and knocks at the door of your hearts; He doth so this day, and by *this* Sermon, O that you would hear the Lord Jesus calling to you from Heaven, and saying, *Turn ye at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you.*

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*Tibi Domine.*

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# ROMANS

CHAPTER I  
The apostle Paul, an Israelite, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, and a student of Gamaliel, the great teacher of the law at Jerusalem, was called by God to be an apostle of Jesus Christ.

He was sent to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to establish churches in every city. He was a man of great power and authority, and his words were received with joy by many people.

He was a man of great love and compassion, and he was willing to suffer for the sake of the Gospel. He was a man of great faith and courage, and he was not afraid to stand up for the truth.

He was a man of great wisdom and understanding, and he was able to teach the people in a way that they could understand. He was a man of great kindness and gentleness, and he was able to win the hearts of many people.

He was a man of great strength and endurance, and he was able to travel long distances without tiring. He was a man of great patience and perseverance, and he was able to wait for the Lord's will.

He was a man of great glory and honor, and he was able to bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ.







